

# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SIKHS

E. H. PAYNE, M.A.

UC-NRLF



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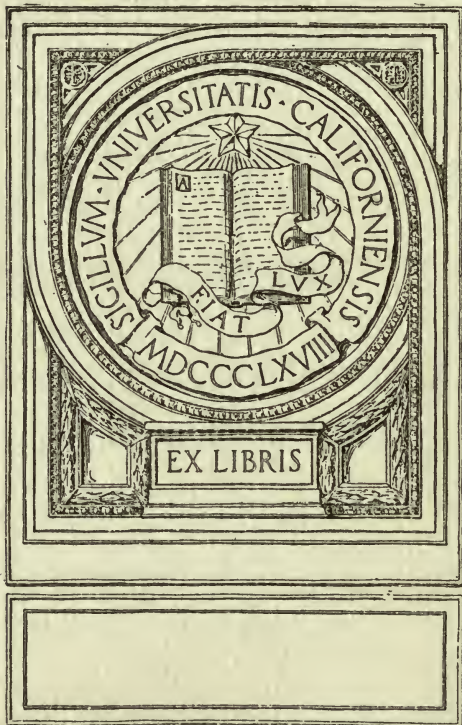
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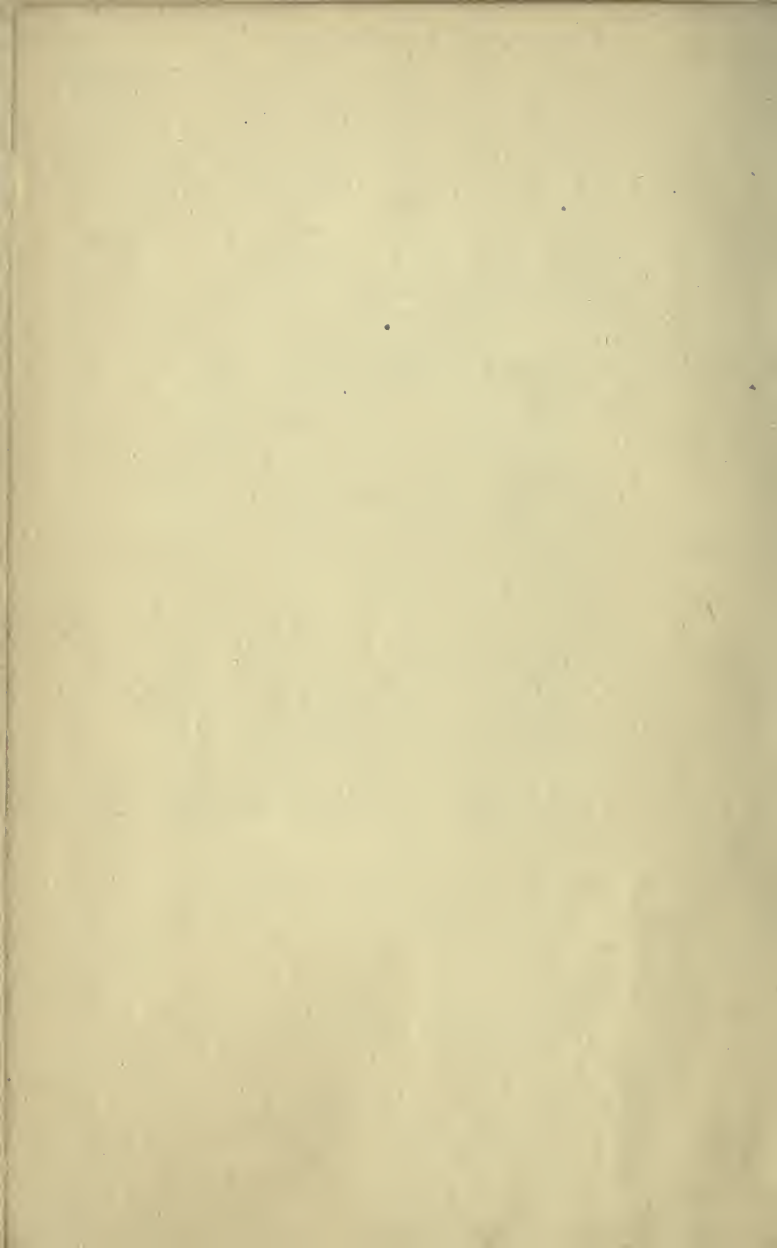
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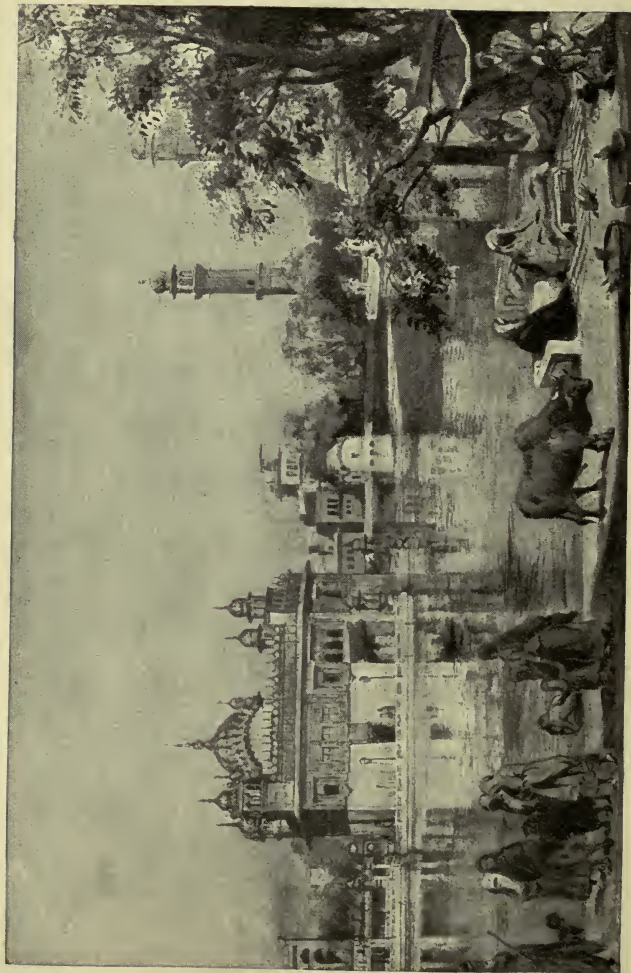








A SHORT HISTORY  
OF THE SIKHS.



THE GOLDEN TEMPLE AND TANK, AMRITSAR.  
(*Victoria and Albert Museum, Indian Section.*)

# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SIKHS

BY  
C. H. PAYNE, M.A.  
LATE OF THE BHOPAL STATE SERVICE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS  
LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN,  
NEW YORK, AND BOMBAY.



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# THE KINGDOM OF LAHORE

DURING THE LAST YEARS OF SIKH RULE

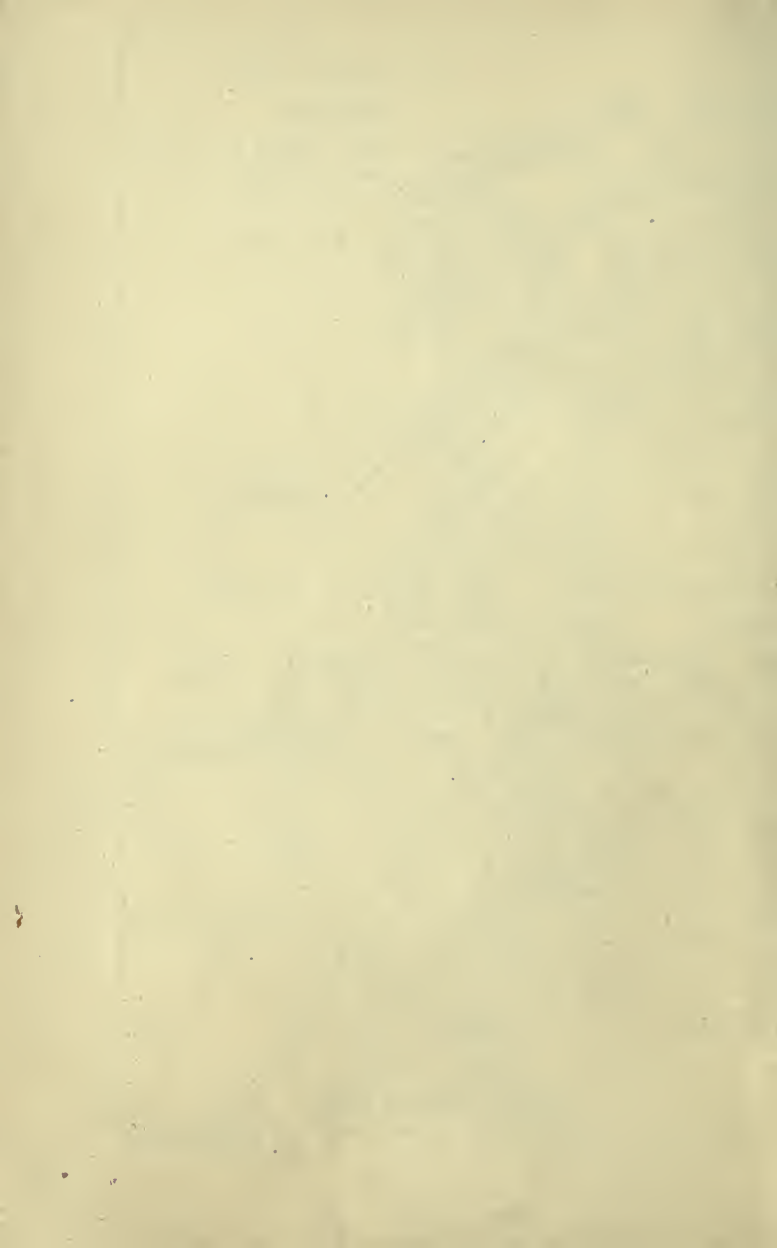
*English Miles*

0 50 100 150 200









# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SIKHS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### BÁBÁ NÁNAK.

1469 A.D. is the first date in Sikh history. It was in this year, half a century before Bábar laid the foundations of the Moghul empire, and thirty years before Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut, that Bábab Nának, the founder of the Sikh community, was born. This event, so small in itself, yet fraught with such far-reaching consequences, took place at Talwandi, a little village near Lahore, on the banks of the Rávi.

The Rávi is one of the five branches of the river Indus, from which the Punjab (*panj*, five, and *áb*, water), the home of the Sikh people, derives its name. These five streams are the Jhelum, the Chenáb, the Rávi, the Beas, and the Sutlej. The Punjab may be described as the triangular piece of land lying between the last-named tributary and the Indus proper, its base being a line drawn from Simla to the Khaibar Pass.

The Sikh kingdom, at the time of its greatest expansion under Ranjít Singh, included, besides this triangle, the states of Kashmír and Jammu, on the northern side of the above-mentioned base line; the districts of Hazára, Pesháwar, Kohát, and Bannu, which make up the present North-West Frontier Province; and the district of Deraját,<sup>1</sup> lying between the Indus and the Sulaimán mountains. The Punjab is divided into five sections by the branches of the Indus. These sections are called doábs (*do*, two, and *áb*, water), and their names, taken in order from west to east, are the Ságar, the Jetch, the Rechna, the Bári, and the Jálándhar Doábs.<sup>2</sup> The Bári Doáb, between the Rávi and the Beas, is the real home of the Sikhs, and the history of their nation centres round its three chief cities, Lahore, Amritsar, and Múltán.

South of the Himalayas, the Punjab consists of one vast alluvial plain, broken only by the wide and often shifting channels of its five rivers. These in winter are but insignificant streams, but when the mountain snows begin to melt, their waters rise and overflow the surrounding country for miles on either side, rendering the tracts thus inundated

<sup>1</sup> Deraját (the land of *deras* or camps) was the camping-ground of many of the early Afghan invaders of India. Their halting-places often developed into towns, some of which—such as Dera Ismail Khán, Dera Gházi Khán, Dera Fattah Khán—still bear the names of Afghan chiefs.

<sup>2</sup> The positions of the doábs may be easily remembered, as the name of each is composed of letters taken from the names of the two rivers by which it is enclosed. Thus the Bári Doáb is between the Beas and the Rávi; the Rechna is between the Rávi and the Chenab; the Jetch is between the Jhelum and the Chenab; and the Bist Jálándhar is between the Beas and the Sutlej. The names were invented by the Emperor Akbar.

highly fertile. The central and higher portions of the doábs which, thanks to artificial irrigation, we now number amongst the great wheat-fields of the empire, were, in earlier days, little better than arid wastes, where grass and thorny bushes, struggling through the sand, afforded fuel for the inhabitants and a scanty pasture for their herds of camels, goats, and buffaloes. The climate of these regions is one of extremes. In winter the cold is more severe than in almost any other part of India, while in the hot weather the thermometer frequently rises to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

The upper belt of the doábs is the richest portion of the Punjab. The soil is fertile, and the rainfall abundant; vegetation is, in consequence, luxuriant, and cultivation of every kind flourishes. Valleys rich as that of Kangra slope down from the mountains, green in the spring with grass, and in summer with rice. On these terraces plants of all latitudes find a home, and wheat and barley grow with the mulberry, the tea plant, and the vine. Amongst the other products of this salubrious region may be mentioned barley, sugar, saffron, and indigo; the mountains themselves produce drugs, dyes, and many varieties of fruit, while they abound in copper and iron ore, and contain extensive deposits of rock salt.

The inhabitants of the Punjab consist mainly of three races—the Játs, the Rájputs, and the Patháns, each split up into many tribes and classes. All the Patháns are Muhammadans, and nearly all the Játs are either Hindus or Sikhs. Amongst the Rájputs

of the Punjab there are both Hindus and Sikhs; but the majority profess the faith of Islam, and belong to the class which we now call Punjabi Muhammadans. Of the countless smaller races, those most closely connected with Sikh history are the Khattris, or traders, and the Dogras, a mixed race of Rájput descent occupying the hill country about Jammu. Other tribes<sup>1</sup> whom from time to time we shall have occasion to mention, may all be classed under one or other of the three principal divisions.

It is by no means easy for us to picture to ourselves the state of India at the close of the fifteenth century. To-day, the word "India" signifies a single country controlled by a single government; a country inhabited by many races, differing from one another in religion, language, and manner of life; yet all of them owning allegiance to one great Chief. We think of them as a whole, and we call them "the people of India." But when Báábá Nának first saw the light a very different state of things prevailed. Used in reference to his day, the word "India" signifies nothing more than a geographical area; it is the name, not of a country, but of a collection of countries, each as distinct from, and as independent of, the others as are the countries of Europe or Asia to-day.

A glance at the accompanying map will afford some idea of the position and relative importance of the principal kingdoms which, at the time of the birth of Nának, made up the continent of India.

The Afghan empire, which in the days of the first

<sup>1</sup> For an account of these tribes, see Appendix C.



# INDIA

IN THE LATTER HALF OF  
THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

English Miles

0 100 200 300 400



Tughlák kings<sup>1</sup> embraced nearly the whole of India, was greatly diminished both in size and strength. The terrible effects of Timúr's invasion in 1398 had not passed away; and though the Lodi emperors, the last of the Afghan rulers, boasted that their territories extended from the Indus to Bengal, their authority was practically confined to the country between and immediately around the cities of Delhi and Agra. To the south of the Sutlej the Rájputs, though hemmed in on every side by Muhammadan powers, still maintained their ancient independence; indeed at this time their princes, under the leadership of Rána Sanga, the renowned chieftain of Chítor, constituted the most formidable power in the whole of India. To the south and south-west of Rájputána lay the Muhammadan kingdoms of Málwa and Gujarát. In the Deccan, the Bahmini kingdom, founded in 1347 by one of Muhammad Tughlák's Afghan generals, extended from the Tapti to the Kistna, and the remainder of the peninsula, from the Kistna to Cape Comorin, was occupied by the famous Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. Of the lesser states, Khandesh, Jaunpúr, and Bengal were in the hands of Afghan sultans; Gondwána was tributary to the Bahmini sultan; Kashmir and Sind were under Moslem rule; while Orissa still maintained its independence as a Hindu state.

It will thus be seen that, with the exception of

<sup>1</sup> The Tughlák dynasty, founded in 1320 by Ghiyás-ud-dín Tughlák, and firmly established by his son and successor, Muhammad Tughlák, lasted till 1414. The Sayads ruled from 1414 to 1450, and were followed by the Lodis, the last of whom, Ibrahim Lodi, was defeated by Bábar at the first battle of Pá nipat, 1526.



Vijayanagar and Rájputána, practically the whole of India was under the control of Muhammadan kings. But though professing one faith, these alien rulers had little else in common. The offshoots of the various dynasties that had succeeded one another on the imperial throne, they came of different races and from different countries; and hence they regarded one another with as little good will as they displayed towards their Hindu subjects. The hand of each was against his neighbour, and that king reigned longest who could longest keep his enemies at bay. Confusion and bloodshed prevailed throughout India, and nowhere more so than in the Punjab. Lying in the very path of the invader, this unhappy land had been a stranger to peace since Mahmúd of Ghazni first led his victorious armies across the Indus. Though nominally a part of the Delhi kingdom, it had long been at the mercy of its Afghan governors, who, despising the authority of their weak masters, sought only to secure their own independence, and to enrich themselves at the expense of the unfortunate people over whom they held their tyrannical sway.

Turning from the political to the religious world, confusion and unrest again confront us. The Muhammadan invaders had brought with them their own methods of government, their own manners and customs, their own arts, crafts, and language, all of which were new to the peoples of India, and exercised a powerful influence on their political and social development. But nothing that the followers of the Prophet imported from the West was more alien to the land of their adoption than their

religion. The doctrines of Islam were not only unlike those of the religions of India, but were in direct conflict with them. To the Muhammadan every Hindu was an idolater, and to the Hindu every Muhammadan was a barbarian.

Wide, however, as was the difference between Islam and Hinduism, it was impossible that these two faiths could exist side by side for centuries without acting and reacting the one upon the other; nor was it possible for two races living in close daily contact to be for ever wrangling and fighting. A certain degree of mutual toleration became essential if the ordinary business of life was to be carried on. Toleration soon led to a closer intimacy; and, as time went on, the followers of either faith began to find out that there were aspects of the other which deserved their consideration, if not their respect.

From the first, the lower orders of the Hindus were strongly attracted by a people who could despise the sanctity of the Brahmin, were as brave as Rájputs, and laughed at the restrictions of caste. Conversions to the new faith soon began to take place, and their number increased year by year. Gradually, too, the doctrine of the unity of God and His abhorrence of images operated on the minds of all classes of Hindus, and recalled even to the learned the simple teaching of the Vedas.

At the same time, the reverence paid to Brahmins excited the envy and admiration of sheikhs and sayads, who began to claim a like sanctity and to exact a like homage; while Moghuls and Patháns

imitated the exclusiveness of the Rájpút, and arrogated to themselves all the privileges of a superior caste. Many Muhammadans attended at the great Hindu festivals, when the mirth and revelry inseparable from such occasions afforded a welcome contrast to the more austere ceremonial of their own faith. The feast of Muharram, at which the Mussalman is wont to relax somewhat the stern discipline of his creed, was attended by so many Hindus that it almost came to be regarded as a joint festival. The superstitions of one faith became the superstitions of the other. "*Pírs* and *Shahíds*, saints and martyrs, equalled Krishna and Bheiruv in the number of their miracles, and the Mahometans almost forgot the unity of God in the multitude of the intercessors whose aid they implored. Thus custom jarred with custom, and opinion with opinion, and while the few always fell back upon their revelations, the Koran and Vedas, the public mind was agitated, and found no sure resting-place with Brahmins or Moollas, with Muhadeo or Mahomet."<sup>1</sup>

Bábá Nának was not the first religious reformer who sought to unite Hindus and Mussalmans in the bonds of a common faith. Early in the fourteenth century the teaching of Rámanand, and after him of Kabír, foreshadowed that of the founder of Sikhism. Both these reformers had proclaimed the unity of God, and the equality of men in the sight of God. They had condemned caste, and protested against the authority of the Brahmin priesthood. They had taught, as afterward Nának

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Sikhs*, by J. D. Cunningham, p. 35.

taught, as the great Luther himself taught, that purity of life is of greater worth than the observance of outward ceremonial, and that the sinful desires of the flesh are only to be overcome by prayer and contemplation. In many parts of India their doctrines are still widely known and highly regarded. But both Rámanand and Kabír were too much imbued with the spirit of asceticism to be the founders of a popular religion. The seed which Nának sowed produced a richer harvest than theirs, not because he expounded a nobler philosophy or preached a purer morality, but because he adapted his teaching to the needs of human life—because he realized, what they had failed to realize, that a religion, if it is to be a living force, must be a practical religion, one that teaches mankind, not how to escape from the world, but how to live worthily in it; not how evil is to be avoided, but how it is to be met and overcome.

All that we know for certain of the personal career of Bábá Nának could be told in a dozen sentences, though the legends and traditions that have grown up round his name would fill as many volumes. Legends, however legendary they may be, are seldom without historical value; for to know the anecdotes that were current about a man during or shortly after his lifetime is to know at least something of the man himself. For our present purpose, however, we must be content with a very brief summary of the more generally accepted story of the life of Nának. Those who wish to study the picture more minutely

will find all the details they require in Trumpp's translation of the *Adi Granth*, or in the more recent and comprehensive work of Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*.

Bá bá Nának belonged to the Khatri or trading caste. He was the only son of his father, Kálu, who held in the village of Talwandi the respectable office of *patwári*, or village accountant. Even in his early childhood, Nának appears to have been of a pious disposition, and much given to contemplation. His preternatural gravity and indifference to the life around him caused his parents, and his father in particular, no little concern. One day, with a view to turning his son's thoughts into a more practical channel, Kálu entrusted him with twenty rupees, and bade him go forth and trade with it and make what profit he could. Obedient to his father's instructions, Nának, taking with him his servant Bá la, set out for a neighbouring village where he thought to lay out his money to advantage. He had not proceeded far on his way when he fell in with a company of fakirs, with whom he entered into a discussion on the unity of God. The learning and pious demeanour of the fakirs so greatly pleased him that, on discovering that they had tasted no food for four days, and were without the means of procuring any, he took from his bag the money which his father had given to him and distributed it amongst them.

Kálu was greatly enraged at the loss of his twenty rupees. He punished Nának severely for his disobedience, and strove more than ever to



break him of his religious habits. But Nának paid little attention either to persuasion or to admonition. He displayed more and more disinclination to engage in any secular task, and passed more and more of his time in religious contemplation. At last, trusting that a fixed occupation and regular duties would restore his son's mind to a normal state, Kálu sent him away to Sultánpúr, where he had obtained for him the post of storekeeper in one of the royal granaries.

For some years Nának applied himself with zeal to his uncongenial duties. He married a wife and became the father of two sons, and Kálu congratulated himself on the success of his plan. But though Nának made an efficient storekeeper, his thoughts were constantly directed towards spiritual things. He lived a life of severe abstinence, devoting only a small fraction of his earnings to his own wants, and giving the remainder to the poor. At night he retired to the forest, where he spent the hours in prayer and in singing hymns to the Creator.

Once, while resting in his accustomed retreat, God appeared to him in a vision, and bade him go forth and proclaim His name to the world. For three whole days Nának remained in the forest, absorbed in the contemplation of his divine mission. The people of Sultánpúr, to whom he had endeared himself by his charitable deeds, thought that he had been drowned in the neighbouring river; and on his reappearance amongst them they rejoiced greatly, and welcomed him as

one returned from the dead. He seemed to them like one in a dream, and when questioned as to what had befallen him he uttered only these words, "There is no Hindu and no Muhammadan," and for two whole days no other sentence escaped his lips.

Nának now resolved to devote his whole life to his mission. He abandoned his post at the granary, and, having distributed his earthly goods amongst the poor, took up his abode in the jungle, and assumed the garb and manner of life of a fakir. Here he practised all the austerities of his holy calling, and began to give utterance to those inspired songs afterwards collected and preserved in the *Adi Granth Sahib*, the Sacred Book of the Sikhs. His sole companion at this time was his faithful servant and disciple Mardána, who attended him in all his subsequent wanderings. Mardána was a skilled musician, and morning and evening sang his master's songs to the accompaniment of the rebec.

Kálu and his whole family were greatly distressed when they learnt that Nának had become a fakir, and did all in their power to induce him to return to the world. They even went in person to remonstrate with him, and offered him land, a house to live in, horses, jewels, rich clothes—in short, everything that money could procure—if he would yield to their entreaties. But though he received them with every sign of affection, nothing could turn him from his holy purpose. Their prayers and their bribes were alike disregarded, and they were constrained to accept a fakir's blessing, and to depart whence they had come.

Bá bá Nának did not remain long in the neighbourhood of Sultánpúr. His mission was not to sit still, but to spread the knowledge of the true God throughout the land. From this time forward till he reached old age he was a wanderer, journeying from country to country, and from city to city, preaching his gospel, making disciples, and disputing with holy men of every caste and creed. There appear to have been four principal "wanderings." The first was to the east, and included visits to Benáres, Gaya, Pánipat, Dharmśála, Delhi, and Sayadpúr. He was at the last-named place when it was captured by Bábar, and was himself seized and imprisoned by the imperial troops. His captivity, however, was not of long duration. His fame as a preacher reached the ears of Bábar, who summoned him to his presence, and was so delighted at the eloquence with which he expounded and defended his doctrine that he ordered his immediate release, and directed that he should be shown every mark of respect. The second wandering was to the south, and is said to have included a lengthy sojourn in the island of Ceylon. The third was to the north, and was chiefly confined to the district of Kashmir. The fourth and last was to the west. This was the longest journey of all, and is believed by many to have extended even to Mecca and Medina. The story of this pilgrimage is a favourite one with the Sikhs, though it rests on somewhat slender evidence.

Towards the close of his life, Nának laid aside the habits and garb of a fakir, and settled down with his family at Kartárpúr. He still continued



to preach his gospel, and every day the *Jappi* and the *Solaha*, the morning and evening services of prayer which he himself had composed, were chanted in his presence. Before his death he, named as his successor Bábá Angad, whom by many tests he had proved to be the most faithful of all his disciples. When it became apparent that his end was near, a dispute arose between his Hindu and Mussalman followers as to the disposal of his remains. The former wished fire to consume them; the latter, to commit them to the earth. Neither side was willing to give way, and the question was referred to Nának himself. In reply, he directed that after his death flowers should be strewn by his Hindu disciples on one side of his bier, and by his Mussalman disciples on the other, and that his body should be taken by those whose flowers remained fresh till the morning. When day dawned, it was found that the flowers on both sides were still fresh, and on the pall being lifted nothing was to be seen but the empty bier.

Bábá Nának did not claim to be the originator of a new faith. He was essentially a reformer. His desire was not to sweep away Hinduism, but to restore it to its ancient purity. Like Luther, he came to protest—to protest against the idolatry, the blind superstitions, and the empty ritual which had so long estranged religion from morality, and the hearts of men from their Creator. But if Nának did not regard himself as the maker of a new religion; still less did he profess to be the founder of a new nation. His purpose was ethical, not political; and though, as we shall see later, the Sikhs developed

a political organization, and grew into a powerful kingdom, they were, and are, before all else, a religious sect. The word *sikh* signifies "disciple," and was the name given by Nának to his followers, and the designation applies only to those who hold the faith of the Khálsa.<sup>1</sup> The theological and moral teaching of Nának differed little from that of his successors, though many years elapsed before Sikhism was fully developed. His writings constitute the most authoritative portion of the *Granth Sahib*, and are looked upon by all Sikhs as the foundation of their faith.

"There is but one God, whose name is true, the Creator."<sup>2</sup> These are the first words of the *Granth Sahib*, and they epitomize the teaching of the whole book. This fundamental truth, the unity of the Supreme Spirit, Nának made the basis of his doctrine. God is one. He is the God, not of the Hindu, not of the Mussalman, not of the Christian, but of mankind. Under whatsoever name He is worshipped—Jehovah, Allah, or Rám—he is "The One," invisible, eternal, uncreated. And since there is but one God for all men, all men are equally His servants. Hence all distinctions of caste, by which one man claims superiority in the eyes of God over his fellows, are worthless and meaningless. Knowledge of God is the most important of all knowledge. It is not for the Brahmin alone, but for all, and all

<sup>1</sup> *Khálsa*, literally "pure," "sincere," is the name of the Sikh commonwealth or brotherhood. "*Wah! Wah! Gurují ká Khálsa!*" ("Victory! Victory to the Khálsa of the Guru!") is the formula pronounced by every Sikh at his baptism.

<sup>2</sup> *The Sikh Religion*, by Max Arthur Macauliffe (vol. i. p. 195).

vested  
Brahmins  
+  
Pis  
too  
strong for  
this complete  
manger

have a right to seek it for themselves. Similarly, the worship of God is not the exclusive privilege of a priesthood; it is a service in which every man has an equal right to participate, a duty which cannot be performed by one man on behalf of another. It must be conducted in the spirit of truth and simplicity, and needs neither incense, nor burnt-offering, nor sacrifice.

In the doctrines of Nának morality holds a higher place than in those of any other Hindu reformer. Few, even of the world's greatest philosophers, have laid down a more exalted moral code than is to be found in the pages of the *Granth Sahib*. Purity of life is set forth as the highest object of human endeavour. Nothing to which man can attain is more acceptable to God. Without it even faith is unavailing. Loyalty, chastity, honesty, justice, mercy, charity, and temperance are among the virtues on which vital stress is laid; while evil-speaking, covetousness, anger, selfishness, extravagance, and cruelty are denounced with equal vigour. The daily practice of cleanliness, of almsgiving, and of abstinence from animal food is strictly enjoined, and obedience to the guru is demanded of every Sikh as his first duty.

Though for many years Nának led the life of an ascetic, he did not advocate this practice in others. He taught that the dress of a fakir and acts of penance were not in themselves evidence of a life of purity, and that men could practise virtue while engaged in the ordinary business of the world as well as, or even better than, they could by with-

drawing to the seclusion of the desert or the mountains. It was in this respect that Nának taught a more enlightened doctrine than his predecessors; it was this practical element which gave to his religious system the vitality which theirs had lacked.

In common with all Hindu teachers, Nának held the doctrine of transmigration, and regarded the final liberation of the soul as the goal towards which mankind is ever struggling. But whereas the Hindu regards this goal as infinitely distant, Nának proclaimed it to be within the reach, not indeed of all his followers, but of such of them as should attain to the highest merit; and he claimed the power to exempt from transmigration those among his disciples whom he counted as "the elect." The possibility of exemption, however remote, was one of the most attractive features of Sikhism in the days of the gurus, and brought it many adherents.

The writings of Nának were collected together by Arjun, the fifth guru, at the end of the sixteenth century. The *Granth*, or more reverently the *Adi Granth Sahib*,<sup>1</sup> of which they form the principal part, contains, in addition, selections from the writings of the compiler, and of the three gurus who came before him, Bábá Angad, Amar Dás, and Rám Dás, as well as various hymns composed by Kabír and other Hindu saints, and by the Muhammadan saint Faríd. The most sacred portion of the whole book is the *Japji*, with which it opens, and to which reference has already been made. The *Japji*

<sup>1</sup> *Adi* in Sanskrit signifies "first," and *granth* a "book" or "written code."



is in itself a complete exposition of the Sikh faith. Every orthodox Sikh has it by heart, and repeats it each morning. The *Granth Sahib* is written for the most part in old Punjábí and Hindi, but Persian, Marahtí, and Gujarátí are also represented. The character employed is that known as *Gurumukhi*,<sup>1</sup> the invention of which is attributed to Guru Angad. The hymns are not arranged in their natural order, but according to *rágs*, or musical measures, and this, combined with the mixture of languages and dialects, and the fact that there is no separation of words, renders their correct interpretation by no means easy.<sup>1</sup> The Sikhs are not as a rule highly educated, and there is little doubt that inability to read their scriptures has contributed to the decadence in recent times of their religious zeal. The original compilation is said to be preserved at Kartárpúr; but the oldest copy now in use is that which is enshrined in the Har Mandar, or Golden Temple, at Amritsar, where it is daily read aloud. The *Granth Sahib* is highly revered by the Sikh community, and a copy of it is still carried at the head of every Sikh regiment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix E.

<sup>2</sup> To each regiment of Ranjít Singh's army "at least one 'Grunt'hee,' or reader of the scriptures, was attached, who, when not paid by the government, was sure of being supported by the men. The Grunt'h was usually deposited near the 'jhunda' or flag, which belonged to the regiment, and which represented its headquarters." (See Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*, p. 185.)

## CHAPTER II.

### GURU GOVIND SINGH.

BÁBÁ NÁNAK died in the year 1539. Of the nine gurus who came after him, the last, Guru Govind Singh, is the most famous, and the only one to whom it is necessary to refer at length. The lives of the remaining eight were, with one exception, comparatively uneventful, and demand only a passing notice.<sup>1</sup> During the period over which these extend, the Sikhs developed from a mere religious fraternity into a strong militant power. Nának preached a gospel of peace; but there was no peace for the Sikhs in the empire of the Moghuls. Just as the Romans sought, by unremitting persecution, to stamp out Christianity, so the Moghul emperors sought to stamp out the Khálsa. Like the Romans, they succeeded only in strengthening that which it was their purpose to destroy.

The three gurus who came next after Nának—Guru Angad, Guru Amar Dás, and Guru Rám Dás—held office during the beneficent reigns of Humáyún and Akbar, and were fortunate enough to enjoy the good will of those magnanimous sovereigns. Guru

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A (1).

Angad belonged to the Khatri caste, was a zealous preacher, and committed to writing all that he knew of Bábá Nának. Guru Amar Dás was also a zealous preacher. He gained many new followers, and is chiefly remembered for his vigorous crusade against the practice of sati.) Guru Rám Dás, highly esteemed on account of his piety, won the favour of Akbar, and received from him the grant of a piece of land some fifty miles to the east of Lahore. Here he settled, and dug the now famous tank of Amritsar.

Guru Rám Dás died in 1581, and was succeeded by his son Arjun, who held office for twenty-five years. Arjun is celebrated, not only as the compiler of the *Granth Sahib*, but as the first guru to assume the temporal as well as the spiritual control of his followers. Making Amritsar his headquarters, he established himself as the administrative head of their community, and framed laws to regulate their social and political life. The rapid development of the Sikhs at this time, and the growing influence of their guru, soon led to trouble with the Moghuls, and the persecution of their sect at the hands of the Moghul emperors dates from Arjun's ministry.

Arjun  
pol

In the year 1605, Jahángír ascended the throne of Delhi, and in the following year Arjun was accused of complicity in the rebellion of Prince Khúsrú. The charge was brought against him by the Governor of Lahore, whose enmity he had incurred by rejecting an alliance with his family. Arjun was represented to the emperor as a man of seditious character and dangerous ambitions. He was cast into prison, where he died of the tortures inflicted on him. Arjun had

seen clearly that it was impossible to preserve his followers without the aid of arms; and his last injunction to his son and successor, Har Govind, was to sit fully armed on his throne, and to maintain the largest military force he could muster.

Har Govind was well qualified to carry out his father's instructions. He was by nature more of a soldier than a priest, and he burned to avenge his father's death. He infused his military ardour into his disciples, and soon had a formidable body of fighting men at his command. At times he found it expedient to place his force at the service of the emperor; but his general attitude towards the Moghuls of the Lahore province was one of uncompromising hostility. He was frequently in collision with the imperial troops, and on most occasions had the better of the encounter. So much did his royal state and military array alarm Jahángír that he was seized and imprisoned in the Gwalior fortress; and though he managed to obtain his release, he died almost immediately afterwards.

Of the three succeeding gurus there is little to record. Their names were Har Rai, Har Krishen, and Teg Bahádur; and their lives cover a period of thirty years, from 1645 to 1675, during which the hostility of the Moghuls continued unabated. When, in 1658, Aurangzeb ascended the throne he lost no opportunity of persecuting the gurus and their war-like disciples. Finally he seized Teg Bahádur, and caused him to be cruelly executed for refusing to embrace the faith of Islam.

Govind Singh, the tenth and last of the gurus,

Har  
Govind  
VI Guru

Teg  
Bahádur  
→



was only fifteen years old when his father was murdered. Fearing a like fate for himself, the boy took refuge in the hill country of Hoshiapúr, and for nearly twenty years lived in seclusion, brooding on his own and his people's wrongs, and perfecting his future plans. The end which he set before himself was nothing less than the overthrow of the Moghul empire, and the establishment of the Sikhs as an independent power. On emerging from his retirement, he applied himself heart and soul to his mission. He saw that progress would be impossible unless he could fire his followers with new zeal and add largely to their numbers. To accomplish this, he relied on his spiritual authority as guru. He called an assembly, announced his mission, and proclaimed the doctrine which was to weld the Sikhs into a military nation. Before his audience dispersed, he instituted the *pahul*, or baptismal ceremony;<sup>1</sup> and after baptizing five of his disciples he received the rite himself, taking the title of "Singh,"<sup>2</sup> which he ordained should be added to the name of every new member of the Khálsa.

<sup>1</sup> Sikhs are not ordinarily initiated till they reach years of discretion. The essentials of the ceremony are that at least five Sikhs should be assembled, and it is generally arranged that one of the number is of some religious repute. Some sugar and water are stirred together in a vessel of any kind, usually with a two-edged sword; but any iron weapon will answer the purpose. The novice stands with his hands folded in an attitude of humility or supplication, and he repeats after the elder or minister the main articles of his faith. Some of the water is then sprinkled on his face and hands, after which he drinks the remainder, and exclaims, "Wah Guru!" (Hail Guru!) or "Wah Guruji ká Khálsa!" (Victory to the Khálsa of the Guru!); and the ceremony concludes with an injunction that he be true to God, and to his duty as a Sikh. (Adapted from Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*.)

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix D.

Seed  
Sikh  
empire

It was no part of Guru Govind's object to displace the teaching of Nának, but rather to adapt it to the new needs of his people. His desire was to see his *sikhs* more completely separated from the Hindus than had hitherto been the case; to disconnect their outside sympathies, and to instil into them the spirit of nationality. One of the main obstacles to the realization of this desire was the caste system, and in dealing with it he went a step farther than Nának. The latter, though he had denounced caste distinctions, had never actually forbidden their observance by his followers, many of whom laid as much stress on them as the Hindus themselves. The Brahmin Sikh continued to wear the triple thread, the Rájput continued to consider himself the superior of the Khatri, and the Khatri continued to look down upon the whole Sudra community. Govind took the bull by the horns. He not only reaffirmed the absolute equality of every Sikh in the eyes of God, but he altogether prohibited the observance of caste distinctions within the Khálsa. This action gave great offence to those who claimed to be of high caste, and not a few Brahmin Sikhs preferred to leave the community rather than discard the sacred thread. But their loss was more than compensated by the large numbers of the humbler classes who now took the *pahul*, to whom the doctrine of social equality was as attractive as it was distasteful to the Brahmin or the Rájput.

Like Nának, Govind attached the utmost importance to purity of life; but on a level with it he placed brave deeds and devotion to the Sikh

cause. There was no higher duty for a Sikh than to die fighting in defence of his faith; and some years later, when engaged in a fierce battle against Muhammadan troops, Govind promised *mukt*, or exemption from transmigration, to any of his followers who should fall. The carrying of arms was commanded as a daily duty; and the spirit of brotherhood was still further emphasized by the institution of a distinctive dress and the wearing of the five "k's"—namely, the *kes* or uncut hair and beard, the *khanda* or dagger, the *kanga* or comb, the *kuchh* or short drawers ending at the knees, and the *kara* or iron bangle. Female infanticide, a custom prevalent then and for many years after in the Punjab, was strictly forbidden, as was also the practice of *sati*; and rules and regulations were enjoined relating to daily worship, marriage, the law of inheritance, and other matters in which the Sikhs had hitherto conformed to Hindu law. Govind Singh had intended that his own doctrines should form an addition to the *Granth Sahib*; but finding that his idea was regarded with disfavour by the keepers of the holy book, he wisely abandoned it, and his writings were compiled into a separate volume. This work is known as the *Daswín pādshah ká Granth*, or the *Granth of the Tenth Guru*; and though it lacks the sanctity and authority of the older book, it still holds its place as a recognized portion of the Sikh scriptures.

One of the most important results of Govind Singh's activity was the large increase in the number of his followers. The newcomers were mostly of

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the Ját tribe; and since the Játš have always supplied the Khálsa with the bulk of its recruits, a word as to their origin and character is necessary.

In the Punjab, as in India generally, the Brahmins rank above all other castes; the Rájputš stand second, and the Khattris third. The Játš occupy the fourth place in the social scale, though they assert superiority over the Khatri and claim equality of rank with the Rájput. Their origin is uncertain. Some writers affirm their Scythian extraction, and hold that they are the descendants of the Getæ, one of the many Scythian tribes who swarmed into India before the Christian era. But beyond the fact that many of the Punjab tribes are of undoubted Scythic origin, there seems little to support this view. The Játš themselves claim to be derived from the same stock as the Rájputš, and point to Central India as the cradle of their race. Their traditions, as well as their racial characteristics, are in accordance with this claim; and in the absence of any direct evidence to the contrary, there is no reason to dispute it. The Játš are neither an intellectual nor a cultured race. They care little for education, and seldom attain to distinction in any walk of life where learning and brain-power are the chief qualities in demand. As courtiers, lawyers, ministers, or diplomatists, they are no match for the astute Brahmin or the sharp-witted Muhammadan, and they generally prefer to leave such positions to others, and to seek their fortunes in more congenial, if humbler, spheres. But what the Ját lacks in intelligence he makes up for by his courage, his



honesty, his thrift, and his unfailing industry. As a cultivator he is second to none in India; and he can wield a sword as skilfully as he can plough a furrow. He is of a simple-minded, patient, and withal independent disposition; a loyal and law-abiding citizen in times of peace, and a good fighter in times of war. The Ját usually exhibits a splendid physique—tall, spare, but muscular and broad-shouldered. His hair is black and his complexion a deep olive brown, and he wears a long ample beard.

During the years of his retirement Govind Singh practised every form of manly exercise. He became an expert horseman, swordsman, archer, and swimmer, and was a keen follower of the chase. Armed with no other weapon than his sword, he would hunt and slay both lions and tigers. The Ját greatly admired his courage and bodily prowess, and under his training they quickly developed into hardy and daring soldiers. Anandpúr, some fifty miles to the west of Simla, on the banks of the Sutlej, was the place selected by the guru as his headquarters; and here, with all the state of an independent chieftain, he held his court and trained and disciplined his troops.

It was not long before the growing power of Govind Singh excited the jealousy of the surrounding hill chiefs, who saw in his democratic teaching and the military zeal of his followers a serious menace to their own influence and independence. Foremost among these was Rájá Bhím Chand of Bilaspúr, who looked upon the Sikhs as upstarts, and lost no opportunity of molesting them. Amongst his other

designs, Bhím Chand had attempted to get possession of a valuable elephant belonging to Govind Singh, but without success. Unable to steal the animal, he offered to buy it, and when his offer was refused he professed friendship for the guru and tried to borrow it; but his protestations and his requests were treated with equal contempt. Enraged at his failure and at the haughty and threatening attitude of the guru, he prepared for hostilities, and persuaded a number of other chiefs to join him in a combined attack on the forces of the Khálsa. Govind Singh was at this time engaged in fortifying the village of Paunta, some miles to the north of Anandpúr; and on news being brought to him of the enemy's approach, he decided to march out and fight in the open. The battle which ensued, the first that the Sikhs had ever fought, was fierce and bloody, and many fell on both sides. But the forces of the chiefs lacked the devotion and resolution with which the guru was able to animate his followers, and they were defeated and driven from the field.

Having completed the fortifications of Paunta, Govind Singh returned to Anandpúr, which he likewise surrounded with defence works, and then proceeded to Chamkaur, a village lower down the Sutlej, where he erected a third fortress. While he was thus engaged, he received a visit from his late enemy, Bhím Chand of Bilaspúr. Bhím Chand had incurred the wrath of Mián Khán, the Muhammadan viceroy of Jammu, by refusing the tribute demanded of him; and pointing out that submission on his part would undoubtedly result in a similar payment being

exacted from the other hill chiefs, including the guru, he invited the latter to aid him in resisting the demand by force of arms. Govind Singh, to whom the chance of a conflict with his inveterate foes, the Muhammadans, was by no means unwelcome, promised Bhím Chand his support. He counselled him on no account to give way; and when Mián Khán approached to enforce his authority at the point of the sword, the soldiers of the Khálsa rendered the Rája such effectual assistance that the imperial troops were utterly routed.

But gratitude was not among the virtues of Rája Bhím Chand, and not long after the defeat of Mián Khán he again took part with the hill chiefs in an attack on the Sikh stronghold. Anandpúr was besieged on every side. But the defenders, though greatly outnumbered, fought with such determined courage that they not only succeeded in saving their fortress, but marched out and routed the besiegers in the open plain. This achievement added greatly to the fame and influence of Govind Singh, and brought him many new disciples. The Sikhs now felt themselves to be on an equality with the martial Rájputs, and with every victory their pride in the Khálsa increased.

Finding they were unable to crush, or even to check, the growing power of their common enemy, the hill chiefs determined to appeal for assistance to the emperor himself. Aurangzeb was at this time operating in the Deccan, and thither, accordingly, a deputation was sent. The guru was represented as a dangerous rebel, ever engaged in

stirring up hostility between Hindus and Muhammadans, with the ultimate object of overturning the Moghul throne. On receipt of this information Aurangzeb dispatched orders to the viceroys of Delhi, Sirhind, and Lahore to proceed without delay against the guru with all the forces at their disposal, and in a short time Anandpúr was again besieged, this time by an overwhelming army, with Wazír Khán, the viceroy of Sirhind, in supreme command. The devoted bravery of the Sikhs was never more conspicuously displayed than during the long siege which followed. Every day their ardour was newly kindled by the words of their leader, who bade them remember all that their community had suffered at the hands of the Muhammadans, and exhorted them to seek salvation in the next world by dying in the defence of the Khálsa. Though reduced to the utmost straits by hunger, the vigour of their defence never slackened. Assault after assault was repulsed; and it was only when the cutting off of their water supply brought their sufferings to a climax that Govind Singh decided to evacuate the fortress. This he contrived to effect without abandoning his property; and, with all that remained of his exhausted garrison, he made his way to Chamkaur, and once more stood at bay. Knowing that another siege awaited him, he dispatched his wife and two younger sons to Sirhind; but though they reached the town in safety, their presence was betrayed to the Muhammadans. By order of the governor both the lads were cruelly murdered, and their mother died of grief.



The soldiers of the Khálsa enjoyed but a short respite. Chamkaur was soon as closely besieged as Anandpúr had been, and was as desperately defended. The two elder sons of the guru were slain, and many died of starvation. Even the bark of trees was used as food. When it became evident that the fortress was doomed, preparations were made for flight; and again the guru with the remnants of his band succeeded in passing through the lines of the besiegers. He crossed the Sutlej, and sought refuge in the deserts of the Firozpúr district. In the neighbourhood of Bathinda he once more rallied his forces and turned on his pursuers. The scene of this last conflict is still known as Muktsár, or the Field of Exemption, for it was here that the guru fired the zeal of his disciples by promising *mukt* to all who should sacrifice their lives for the Khálsa. The battle was as desperate as any that had preceded it; and though the imperial troops gained the day, they were, for the third time, balked of their prey; for the guru, with a few chosen followers, managed to escape from the field, and, evading pursuit, made his way in safety to Talwandi (thenceforward known as Dam-dama, or the "resting place") in the district of Patíála. Wazír Khán, believing Govind Singh to be amongst the slain, and that the power of the Khálsa was crushed for ever, withdrew his forces, and abandoned the campaign.

Secure in his new retreat, Govind Singh re-established his court, and surrounded himself with all the pomp and circumstance of royalty. It was here

that he compiled the *Daswín pádshah ká Granth*. Damdama became the centre of Sikhism, and a place of resort for learned men from all parts of the country. Numbers of new recruits joined the ranks of the Khálsa, and the position of Govind Singh became stronger than it had ever been.

In 1707, he received a summons to appear at the court of Aurangzeb. This he refused to comply with, and in reply sent a letter setting forth the persecutions which he and his community had suffered at the hands of the imperial government. The result of this letter was a second summons, couched in more conciliatory terms, and assuring the guru of a friendly reception. To this Govind Singh deemed it expedient to send a favourable reply, and escorted by a strong bodyguard he set out for Agra. But the days of Aurangzeb were numbered; and before the guru reached the imperial court, the sceptre was in the hands of his successor, Bahádur Shah.

The new emperor received the guru with distinction, and having at that time more use for a powerful ally than for a dangerous foe, offered him an honourable post in the imperial service. Whether Govind Singh was actuated by a similar motive, or whether he foresaw in the service of his enemy greater opportunities for advancing the cause of the Khálsa than he would be likely to get by open hostility, history does not relate. But whatever his reasons, he accepted the offer, and marched at the head of his own troops for the Deccan on the emperor's business. As to the nature of his

imperial mission, history is again silent. All we know is that he went as far south as the Godávery, and that he made Nander, on the banks of that river, his headquarters. Here he spent much of his time in the company of a Bairági hermit, afterwards known as Banda, the "slave," whom he converted to his own faith and baptized, and to whom he became so much attached that he nominated him his successor, not as guru, but as commander of the forces of the Khálsa.

Govind Singh was not destined to return to his native country. One day, after preaching his doctrines at Nander, he was stabbed by a Pathán assassin; and though the physicians of Bahádur Shah were sent to attend him, they were unable to save his life. He died at the age of forty-eight, in the year 1708, having reigned as guru for nearly thirty-three years.

Guru Govind Singh left no successor. Before his death he called his disciples about him and told them that the mission of the gurus was completed, and that thenceforth their spirits would dwell in the *Granth Sahib* and the Khálsa. "I have entrusted you," he said, "to the immortal God. Ever remain under His protection, and trust to none besides. Wherever there are five Sikhs assembled, know that I am in the midst of them. Henceforth the guru shall be in the Khálsa and the Khálsa in the guru. I have infused my mental and bodily spirit into the *Granth Sahib* and the Khálsa."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *The Sikh Religion*, vol. v. p. 244.

## CHAPTER III.

### EARLY STRUGGLES OF THE KHÁLSA.

ON the death of the last of the gurus, Banda assumed the arms of his master, and the leadership of the Sikh community. Acting in accordance with the instructions he had received from Govind Singh, he at once set out for the north; and at Buria, to the east of Ambála, he was joined by the main body of the Sikh army. The soldiers promised allegiance to their new commander on condition that they should receive the arrears of pay due to them. To satisfy this demand, Banda took the only course open to him, that of plundering the surrounding villages, a course which his troops appreciated more than the villagers, who dispatched an urgent appeal for protection to the Governor of Mustafábád. The latter immediately set out to their assistance with two thousand imperial troops; but his march had scarcely commenced when it was intercepted by Banda and his army. The governor's force was dispersed with great slaughter, and his capital was entered and sacked by the victorious Sikhs. Banda next laid siege to and captured Samána in the Patiála district, and then proceeded to Sirhind. On approaching the city, he was met by a

large force under the viceroy, Wazír Khán. A fierce encounter ensued, in which the Sikhs were completely victorious. Banda engaged Wazír Khán in single combat, and smote off his head with one blow of his sword. The Sikhs then entered Sirhind, which they plundered, massacring many of the inhabitants, and wreaking a terrible vengeance on the murderers of the sons of Guru Govind Singh. Growing more and more confident with each new success, Banda now directed his arms against the hill chiefs, whom, one after another, he brought into subjection. He attacked and plundered Batála, defeated a powerful force sent against him by the emperor, and entering Lahore put the governor and all his principal officers to the sword. He was now master of practically the whole region lying between the Sutlej and the Jumna, and he levied and exacted tribute from all classes of the population. But the tide soon turned.

Hearing of the defeat of his troops, Bahádur Shah hastened in person to the Punjab at the head of a large army. Banda declined a pitched battle, and established himself in the hill-fort of Dabír. Here he held out for some time, but starvation compelled him to evacuate the fort and seek shelter in the mountains. At this critical juncture Bahádur Shah died, and the fugitives were thus saved from pursuit. But for this unforeseen event, the entire Sikh community must have been exterminated. The confusion which followed the death of Bahádur Shah was all in favour of the fugitive chief and his indomitable followers. For four years he was left unmolested,



and he was able in this time to reorganize his troops and regain many of his lost strongholds. Once more the long-haired troopers of the Khálsa became the terror of the Punjab, and a formidable addition to the dangers which surrounded the already tottering throne of the Moghul sovereigns.

Farrukh Siyar was the next emperor to undertake operations against the Sikhs. He entrusted the conduct of the campaign to Abdur Samad Khán, the Governor of Kashmír, an intrepid and skilful general. Abdur Samad was determined to do his work thoroughly, and the force which he took into the Punjab was superior in numbers, discipline, and equipment to any with which the Sikhs had hitherto come in contact. Outnumbered and outgeneralled, Banda suffered defeat after defeat, and was eventually driven to bay in the fortress of Gurdáspúr. Here, after a stubborn defence, he was literally starved into surrender. The entire garrison fell into the hands of Abdur Samad Khán. The majority were put to death on the spot, while Banda and more than seven hundred of his chief retainers were sent to Delhi, where, after being subjected to every kind of insult, they were beheaded, a hundred at a time, on seven successive days. The execution of Banda was reserved to the end. He was paraded through the city in an iron cage, and tortured to death. A general proclamation was now issued for the destruction of Sikhs wherever found. They were hunted down like wild beasts, and any man who killed a Sikh could claim a reward from the viceroy of Lahore. The few who escaped the persecution fled



to the mountains, and for a generation their history is a blank.

But the mission of Govind Singh had not failed. Scattered and disorganized though they were, without a leader, without a square yard of land they could call their own, the Sikhs were nearer to nationality at this time than they had ever been. Hardship and persecution had served only to strengthen their attachment to their faith, and to draw them into yet closer unity. They now regarded themselves as a distinct people. They believed in their destiny as foretold by Govind Singh, and the one determination from which they never swerved was to struggle unceasingly for the triumph of the Khálsa. Branded as outlaws, the hand of every man against them, they divided themselves into bands, each under its own leader, but all ready to combine in case of necessity under a common head. These bands moved rapidly from place to place, plundering villages, levying black-mail, and driving off flocks and herds to their mountain fastnesses, where none dared follow them. Gradually their resources and their numbers increased, and they awaited only a favourable opportunity to re-establish themselves in the lands and strongholds from which they had been ousted. The state of the Moghul empire at this time was altogether favourable to their plans and mode of life. The bigotry of Aurangzeb and the incompetence of his successors had reduced the court at Delhi to complete prostration. The authority of the emperor hardly reached beyond the walls of his capital. On every side governors and viceroys

declared their independence, while the Mahrattas dictated terms to the Moghul at the very steps of his throne.

In 1739 Nádir Shah with his destroying host swept through the Punjab to the sack of Delhi. This crowning catastrophe, while it sounded the death knell of the Moghul empire, offered the Sikhs the chance for which they had been watching. Taking advantage of the confusion that prevailed, they swooped down from the mountains to plunder the unfortunate villagers of the property they were struggling to remove from the path of the robber-legions of Nádir; and when these same robber-legions, glutted with plunder, set out on their return march, bands of Sikh horsemen hung on the flanks and rear of the disorderly columns, cutting off all who strayed from the protection of the main body, and securing for themselves a by no means insignificant share of the spoils of Delhi.

Richer than they had been for many a long day, the Sikhs now came down from their hiding-places in the hills and took possession of and fortified the town of Dáliwál on the banks of the Rávi. Thither all the wanderers flocked, and many whom fear of death had forced to abandon the brotherhood were readmitted and rebaptized. Numbers of new proselytes joined the ranks of the Khálsa, and, thus strengthened, the Sikhs extended their irruptions all over the Punjab. Amritsar was regained, and once more became a place of precarious pilgrimage. "Some performed this pilgrimage in secret and in disguise; but in general, according to

a contemporary Muhammadan author, the Sikh horsemen were seen riding at full gallop towards their favourite shrine of devotion. They were often slain in making the attempt, and sometimes taken prisoners; but they used, on such occasions, to seek instead of avoiding the crown of martyrdom, and the same authority states that an instance was never known of a Sikh, taken on his way to Amritsar, consenting to abjure his faith." <sup>1</sup>

In 1747 Nádir Shah was assassinated. The Duráni chief, Ahmad Shah Abdali, became master of Afghanistan, and for twenty years the Punjab reeled under the repeated visitations of this redoubtable and relentless warrior. The Sikhs never lost an opportunity of profiting by the general disorder; and the kingdom of the Punjab sprang from the very causes that laid the empire of the Moghuls in ruins. The conquest, or rather the plundering of India—for he conquered only to plunder the better—was the ruling ambition of Ahmad Shah's life. The same year that he ascended the throne, he led his forces across the Indus. In the Punjab he met with little opposition, and the whole province was soon in his power. When, however, he pressed on towards Delhi, he was less successful; and on the eastern side of the Sutlej he suffered so many reverses that he was obliged to return to his own country to repair his losses. As in the case of Nádir Shah, the Sikhs harassed his retreating army, cutting off stragglers, and securing considerable booty. The Punjab was recovered to the empire, and Mír Mannu, through

<sup>1</sup> *Sketch of the Sikhs*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Malcolm, p. 88.

whose skill the movements of Ahmad Shah had been frustrated, was rewarded with the governorship of the province.

Mír Mannu at once took active steps for the suppression of the Sikhs. He marched against and captured the fort of Rám Raoni, recently erected to protect the approach to Amritsar, and was proceeding to the infliction of further punishment when news of the second approach of Ahmad Shah recalled him hastily to his headquarters. By promising the invader the revenue of four districts as an annual tribute, he obtained a temporary respite. But the promise was soon broken, and at the head of a largely increased force the Shah returned and invested Lahore. Mír Mannu made a brave and protracted defence; but in the end he was forced to capitulate, and Lahore became a province of the Afghan empire. Mír Mannu transferred his allegiance to Ahmad Shah, and continued in charge of Lahore as the deputy of his new master. The latter then pushed on to Kashmír, which he likewise annexed, and then returned to Kábul. Shortly after his departure Mír Mannu died, and his widow took over the control of the province. The weakness of her administration enabled the Sikhs to emerge from their obscurity, and the horsemen of the Khálsa again became the terror of the country. Wherever protection-money was not forthcoming, villages were sacked, cattle swept off, and crops devastated. The greater the anarchy that prevailed, the stronger the Sikhs became.

The next invasion of Ahmad Shah took place in 1755. The empire was by this time too exhausted





AHMAD SHAH DURÁNI.  
(Victoria and Albert Museum, Indian Section.)

to attempt resistance. The Punjab was traversed without opposition, the Sutlej was crossed, Agra and Muttra were plundered, and the capital city itself fell a prey to the ferocious rapacity of the Afghan soldiers. Laden with spoil, the Shah then departed for his own country, the Sikhs easing him of a portion of his ill-gotten gains as he passed through the Punjab. The impotent Moghul was left in possession of his wrecked capital, but the Punjab and Sirhind were annexed by the conqueror, and his son Timúr was left behind to settle their administration.

Timúr quickly realized that the Sikhs constituted the chief danger to the security of his provinces, and he resolved on active measures for their suppression. He decided to strike at the heart of the Khálsa. Accordingly, having collected a large force, he made a rapid march to Amritsar. The city was taken by surprise and captured; the houses of the inhabitants were pillaged, the Golden Temple was razed to the ground, and the sacred tank filled up with rubbish. Timúr had, indeed, struck at the heart of the Khálsa, but he had altogether miscalculated the effect of the blow. The destruction and pollution of their holy city roused the Sikhs to ungovernable fury. Uniting under the leadership of a carpenter named Jassa Singh, they ravaged the whole province. Timúr's troops were everywhere defeated, and he himself was driven to seek refuge in his father's territory. The victorious Sikhs entered and took possession of Lahore, where Jassa Singh proclaimed the Khálsa a state; and rupees were struck in the mint of the Moghuls, bearing the inscription,



“Coined by the grace of the Khálsa in the country of Ahmud, conquered by Jassa the Kallál.”<sup>1</sup>

But many a fierce struggle intervened ere Lahore became the undisputed capital of the Sikh kingdom. A fresh competitor, in the person of the Mahratta leader Mulhár Rao Holkár, had come forward to contest the supremacy of the Punjab. The Mahrattas were at this time by far the greatest military power in India. They had developed as rapidly as the empire had declined, and all the country from Gujarát to Orissa, and from the Punjab to Mysore, was held in their terrible grip. In Delhi the name of Mulhár Rao inspired more dread than that of Shah Abdali himself. To call in one of his antagonists to aid him in crushing the other was the only expedient that offered the helpless emperor any chance of averting his doom. It was a choice of evils; and he took the worse. In daily fear of another visit from the Shah, he invited Holkár to his court. The Mahratta eagerly accepted the invitation. He marched into Delhi, swept aside the authority of the emperor and his ministers, and quartered his lawless soldiery on the terrified populace.

A rich district torn by internal disorders offered opportunities for plunder which no Mahratta leader was ever known to neglect, and Holkár had not been long in Delhi before he decided that the time was ripe for a predatory expedition into the Punjab. The confusion which prevailed on every

<sup>1</sup> The inscription commonly found on Ranjít Singh's rupees is *Dégh wuh Tégh wuh Fátteh wuh nasrut bé dirang yáft az Nánuk Guru Govind Singh*—that is, “Guru Govind Singh obtained from Nánuk grace, power, and victory—victory without pause.”

side rendered effectual opposition impossible; and when Holkár crossed the Sutlej he carried all before him. He expelled the Sikhs from Lahore and the Afghans from Múltán, and the whole province from the Sutlej to the Indus was overrun and occupied by his troops. What the people had suffered at the hands of the Afghans was as nothing in comparison with the horrors of the Mahratta occupation. Wherever the soldiers of Holkár encamped, ruin prevailed, while their lines of march were marked by burning villages and devastated crops. The poor were robbed with merciless barbarity, and the rich could only purchase a doubtful immunity by the payment of exorbitant fines. There is little wonder that when news arrived that Ahmad Shah was marching to recover his lost provinces, it was received throughout Hindustan with feelings akin to joy.

The campaign which ensued, ending with the crushing defeat of the Mahrattas at Pánipat, and their expulsion from the Punjab, belongs to Mahratta rather than to Sikh history. The troops of the Khálsa took no part in the contest, but contented themselves with harassing the outposts and raiding the camps of either of the combatants as occasion offered. Under cover of the general uproar, the chiefs of the various bands appropriated lands and erected forts for their protection. The city of Amritsar was rebuilt, and once more the cupolas and minarets of the Golden Temple were reflected on the surface of the sacred lake. Immediately after his victory at Pánipat, Ahmad Shah returned to Afghanistan, leaving Khwája Obaid Khán, a Duráni

chieftain, and a Muhammadan noble named Zin Khán as the governors respectively of Lahore and Sirhind.

The renewed activity of the Sikhs seriously alarmed Khwája Obaid, and with a strong force he marched to attack Gujránwála, where the Sikhs had taken up a strong position. A sharp encounter resulted in the complete rout of the Muhammadan troops, and the Duráni chief was forced to barricade himself in Lahore. The news of the disturbance reached Kábul, and the Shah at once returned to the Punjab. Uniting with Zin Khán, who was already marching to the assistance of Khwája Obaid, he set out in pursuit of the Sikhs, who, following their usual tactics, withdrew in the direction of the hills, to avoid, if possible, a pitched battle. In this, however, they were unsuccessful. Moving with great rapidity, the Afghans came up with them near Batála, and forced them to give battle. The Sikhs were completely taken by surprise, and although they made a desperate fight, were defeated with the loss of 20,000 men. Ála Singh, a Patíála chieftain, and the foremost of the Sikh leaders, was amongst the prisoners who fell into the hands of Ahmad Shah, and a ransom of five lakhs of rupees was demanded for his release. With great difficulty the money was raised, and the Shah, in token of his admiration for Ála Singh's valour, bestowed upon him a robe of honour and the title of Rája. Before returning to Afghanistan, the Shah again sacked Amritsar, and caused the Golden Temple to be blown up with gunpowder.

No sooner had the Afghans departed, than the exasperated Sikhs reopened the struggle. After holding a *gurumata*, or public council, at Amritsar, they marched southward with a force of nearly forty thousand men. Having captured and sacked Kasúr, a town near Sobráon, on the banks of the Sutlej, they pressed on to Sirhind. Zin Khán, who came out to meet them, was defeated and killed, and for the second time the murder of the sons of Govind Singh was avenged. The Sikhs left not a house standing in Sirhind, and the place was pronounced accursed for evermore. The whole province fell into their hands, and the districts around the capital were added to the domain of Ála Singh of Patiála.

It was not long before intelligence of this daring exploit reached Kábul; and for the seventh time Ahmad Shah led his forces across the Indus. As usual the Sikhs scattered at his approach, and when he reached the plains of Sirhind he searched for them in vain. It was not until he was well on his way home that a sharp attack on his rearguard apprised him of the whereabouts of his ubiquitous foes. The end of the struggle seemed as far off as ever; and even the indefatigable Shah at last began to show signs of wearying of a warfare in which he was never able to make full use of his strength. He was too good a soldier himself not to admire the indomitable courage of the Sikhs, and if in the end he preferred to conciliate rather than to exterminate them, we may believe that his policy, though dictated by necessity, was not altogether opposed to his inclinations. As a first step towards a more friendly understanding,



he had, before quitting Sirhind, appointed Ála Singh, the Patiala chieftain, his governor in that province.

By the Sikhs this step was regarded as a concession rather than a favour; and knowing that the Shah was occupied with dissensions in his own kingdom, they seized the opportunity to march against Lahore. The Muhammadan garrison made but an indifferent defence, and was easily overcome. The Afghan governor was expelled, and the affairs of the city were entrusted to the joint administration of the three chiefs who had effected its capture.

In 1767 Ahmad Shah invaded India for the eighth and last time. The Sikhs were routed on the banks of the Sutlej, and dispersed to their hill retreats, and the ejected viceroy was reinstated at Lahore. But ill-health and the unsettled condition of his own kingdom obliged the Shah to cut short his operations in the Punjab, and inclined him more than ever to conciliatory methods. He abandoned all idea of annexing Sirhind, and acknowledged Rája Ála Singh as independent ruler of the province; while other districts were ceded to the Sikh sirdars who had held Lahore, in the hope of inducing them to uphold the authority of the Afghan governor. Then, for the last time, the Duráni warrior recrossed the Indus; and, for the last time, he suffered the mortification of having his baggage-train plundered by the inexorable Sikhs. As before, conciliation was regarded as a proof of weakness. Hostilities were at once renewed: Lahore was recaptured, and in a short time not a vestige of Afghan authority remained in the Punjab. The Sikhs spread themselves

over the province, seizing estates, and establishing themselves as joint proprietors of the domain of the Khálsa.

The life of Ahmad Shah Abdali, statesman, warrior, and brigand, terminated in what was in his day a very unusual manner. He died in his bed. Cancer in the cheek is said to have caused his death, which took place in the year 1773. He was succeeded by his son Timúr, who, after an unsuccessful attack on the lower Punjab, made no further effort to regain his father's Indian possessions. He reigned for twenty years, during which the Sikhs were left unmolested. At the end of this period the sirdars had developed into influential chiefs, each with a considerable military force at his command; and only their mutual jealousies and impatience of control hindered the fulfilment of Govind Singh's prophecy. The Khálsa had attained independence, but it still awaited the master hand that was to subdue and weld into a nation the turbulent elements of which it was composed.



## CHAPTER IV.

### CONSTITUTION OF THE KHÁLSA.

BEFORE proceeding to an account of the greatest of Sikh leaders, Mahárāja Ranjít Singh, it is necessary that we should understand something of the form of government which prevailed among the Sikhs at this time, and the principles on which it was based. Their political organization was of a very primitive character. It consisted of a federation of clans, each under the leadership of a sirdar or military chief. The cause which gave unity to the whole was two-fold: the preservation of the Sikh faith, and the promotion of the welfare of the Khálsa. As far as their attachment to this cause was concerned, the Sikhs were one people; but in all other respects the clans were as independent of one another as the several states of Rájputána or Central India. As they would brook no interference from the outside world in matters touching the interests of their community as a whole, so they would brook none from one another in the management of their several domains.

The administration of the Khálsa, as well as of the individual clans, was democratic—that is to say,

it was based on the principle of equality as taught by Guru Govind Singh. The clans varied both in size and importance, but all sirdars were regarded as of equal rank; and though one amongst them was selected by common consent to be the leader of the confederacy, his authority was strictly limited to matters affecting the general policy of the Khálsa, and even here his duties were those of a superintendent rather than a ruler. In the constitution of the clans or *misl*s, as these minor associations were termed, the same principle held good. There were no degrees of rank, and no tables of precedence. Membership of a *misl* conferred political, religious, and social equality. The qualifications looked for in a leader were personal courage and military skill. A proved man-at-arms needed neither wealth nor high birth to support his claims to the office of sirdar, which, as in the case of Jassa Singh the carpenter, was frequently conferred on men of humble and obscure origin. The profession of arms was regarded as the most honourable of all occupations. Military service was entirely voluntary: it could be entered or abandoned at will; and the man who was dissatisfied with his position under one leader could leave him and transfer his allegiance to another. The fruits of conquest, whether land, money, or property, were shared equally by those who had taken part in their capture; and it was the duty of the sirdars to see that the distribution was justly carried out.

The larger *misl*s were twelve in number; and their names, derived from those of famous sirdars or

their places of birth, or sometimes from the practice of peculiar customs, were as follows :—

Ahluwália.

Bhangi.

Rámgarhia.

Sukárchakia.

Kanheya.

Nakkai.

Phúlkia.

Singhpúria.

Nishánia.

Krora Singhia.

Dulelwála.

Shahíd.

The first six were located to the north of the Sutlej, and are usually referred to as the Mánjha Sikhs, though, strictly speaking, this designation belongs only to those who occupied the Mánjha district, between the Rávi and the Beas. The remaining six held lands to the south of the Sutlej, in the district of Málwa,<sup>1</sup> and are known as the Málwa, or Cis-Sutlej, Sikhs.

Of the Mánjha clans, the Bhangi, the Rámgarhia, and the Kanheya, who shared the districts around Amritsar, were the most important. The first of these is said to have derived its name from the addiction of its members to the use of *bhang*. Under their famous leader Hari Singh, the Bhangis rose to a very powerful position, Amritsar being the headquarters of the clan. The second, named after a village near Lahore, was founded by the redoubtable carpenter, Jassa Singh. Both these *misl*s were crushed by Ranjít Singh, as was also the third, the Kanheya; but this last escaped complete extinction through a marriage connection with the Mahárája.

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with Málwa of the Deccan.

The Ahluwálias occupied the district between the Sutlej and the Beas, including the state of Kapurthala. They were led by a powerful and capable chief named Jassa Singh, a distiller by caste, who did much to consolidate the power of the Sikhs. The Sukárchakias, ruled by Ranjít Singh, and the Nakkais were the least important of the Mánjha Sikhs. The former were located to the west and the latter to the south of Amritsar.

Of the Málwa clans, the Phúlkian was by far the most powerful. It rose to prominence under Rája Ála Singh of Patiála, and is represented at the present time by a large number of states, of which Jínd, Nabbha, Rámpúr, and Diálpúr are the most important. The Singhpúrias ranked second, their territory including portions of the Ludhiána, Jálandhar, and Ambála districts. The remaining four were of minor significance; and on the rise to power of Ranjít Singh, they, together with the Phúlkian and Singhpúria *misl*s, placed themselves under the protection of the British Government.

But one other association, that of the Akális, remains to be mentioned. This was not a *misl*, but a band of religious devotees, who were looked upon as the guardians of the shrine at Amritsar, and the directors of religious ceremonial. The Akális, alone among the Sikhs, continued to wear the blue chequered robes and steel bracelets ordained by Guru Govind Singh, by whom their order was founded. They were turbulent and fanatical, and a constant source of terror to the more peaceable classes of the community. In war they fought on foot, and were

the only formidable portion of the Sikh infantry. Ranjít Singh did much to reduce the Akális to a state of subjection, but for many years they were the most troublesome element in the Khálsa. Nevertheless, their desperate bravery rendered them a very valuable asset in times of war, and they were always employed on the most dangerous service.

The general policy of the Khálsa was decided by a national council, or *gurumata*, held twice a year at Amritsar. It was presided over by the leader of the confederacy, and was attended by all the principal sirdars. The business of the assembly was preceded by a religious ceremony conducted by the Akális, which is thus described by Sir John Malcolm: "When a Gúrúmatá or national council is called, all the Sikh chiefs assemble at Amritsar. The assembly is convened by the Acális; and when the chiefs meet on this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease, and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of the general good; and actuated by principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion and commonwealth to which he belongs.

"When the chiefs and principal leaders are all seated, the Adi Grant'h and Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h are placed before them. They all bend their heads before the scriptures, and exclaim, *Wá! Guruji ka Khálsa! Wá! Guruji ki Fateh!* A great quantity of cakes made of wheat, butter, and sugar are then placed before the volumes of their sacred writings, and covered with a cloth. These holy cakes, which are in commemoration of the



injunction of Nánac, to eat and to give others to eat, next receive the salutation of the assembly, who then rise, and the Acálís pray aloud, while the musicians play. The Acálís, when the prayers are finished, desire the council to be seated. They sit down, and the cakes being uncovered, are eaten by all classes of Sikhs: those distinctions of original tribes, which are, on other occasions, kept up, being on this occasion laid aside, in token of their general and complete union in one cause. The Acálís then exclaim, 'Sirdars! (chiefs) this is a Gúrúmatá!' after which prayers are again said aloud. The chiefs after this sit closer, and say to each other: 'The sacred Grant'h is betwixt us, let us swear by our scriptures to forget all internal disputes, and to be united.' This moment of religious fervour and ardent patriotism is taken to reconcile all animosities. They then proceed to consider the danger with which they are threatened, to settle the best plans for averting it, and to choose the generals who are to lead them against the common enemy. The first Gúrúmatá was assembled by Guru Govind: and the latest was called in 1805, when the British army pursued Holkár into the Penjáb."<sup>1</sup>

Primitive though this form of government was, it had, nevertheless, served to hold the Sikhs together so long as they were called upon to face a common enemy. Whilst Moghul and Mahratta threatened the existence of the Khálsa, the sirdars, as a matter of course, fought shoulder to shoulder in its defence. But the moment that danger from

<sup>1</sup> *Sketch of the Sikhs*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Malcolm, p. 120-3.



AN AKÁLI AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE GOLDEN TEMPLE.  
(*Victoria and Albert Museum, Indian Section.*)

without disappeared, the bonds of unity were snapped, and the limited authority of the general leader rendered him incapable of controlling the unruly sirdars, or allaying the feuds which arose throughout the length and breadth of the Punjab. So thoroughly had the Sikhs become imbued with the militant spirit, that to fight was the very breath of their being; and rather than allow their swords to rust in their scabbards, they preferred to turn them against one another.

In a country partitioned, as was the Punjab, amongst a number of independent chiefs, each of whom maintained a band of followers, armed to the teeth and paid out of the spoils of war, pretexts for quarrelling could not but be abundant, and the Sikh sirdars fought with and plundered one another with all the zest they had formerly displayed in assailing the legions of Holkár and the Shah. It would be tedious to follow the course of the many quarrels which, at the close of the eighteenth century, endangered the dearly purchased independence of the Khálsa. We must, however, briefly refer to those in which the immediate ancestors of Mahárāja Ranjít Singh were involved, so that we may understand the nature and extent of the difficulties by which, at the commencement of his career, this famous chief, the national hero of the Sikhs, was surrounded.

The Sukárchakia *misl*, to the leadership of which Ranjít Singh succeeded, was founded early in the eighteenth century. It rose to prominence under Mahárāja's grandfather, Charrat Singh, a brave Ját

sirdar, who repeatedly distinguished himself in the early struggles with Ahmad Shah. Shortly after the defeat of Timúr's deputy, Obaid Khán, Charrat Singh, who on that occasion had led the Sikhs to victory, marched with his followers to Kashmír, to espouse the cause of Brij Ráj, then in rebellion against his father, Rája Ranjít Deo, the chief of Jammu. Ranjít Deo had called to his aid the Bhangis under Jhanda Singh, at that time the most powerful of all the Sikh sirdars, while the Kanheyas under Sirdar Jai Singh took sides with the Sukár-chakias. The rival armies encamped within a few miles of each other, and preparations were being made for battle, when Charrat Singh was killed by the bursting of his own matchlock. This event would probably have given the victory to Ranjít Deo, had it not been counterbalanced, on the following day, by the assassination of the Bhangi chief, Jhanda Singh. The deaths of the two leaders brought about a cessation of hostilities, and the Sikh forces withdrew to their respective districts, leaving Ranjít Deo and his son to settle their quarrel as best they could.

These events took place in the year 1773. Mahán Singh, the son and successor of Charrat Singh, was only ten years old when he succeeded to the chiefship of the Sukárchakias. The year after his father's death, he was married to Ráj Kour, the daughter of the Rája of Jínd, who, six years later, became the mother of Ranjít Singh. During his minority, Mahán Singh remained under the guardianship of his mother, a shrewd and



courageous woman, who ruled the *misl* with tact and ability. In 1780, the year of the birth of Ranjít Singh, Mahán took the power into his own hands, and at once made preparations for carrying on the feud with the Bhangi *misl*.

In the meantime, Rája Ranjít Deo of Jammu had died, and the state was now in the hands of Brij Ráj, with whom Mahán Singh had exchanged turbans as a token of everlasting friendship. When the latter assumed control of the Sukárchakias, Brij Ráj appealed to him for assistance against the Bhangis who were marching to attack his capital. Mahán Singh eagerly welcomed the chance of a conflict with his hereditary foes, and set out for Jammu with all the troops he could muster. The Kanheyas likewise joined in the struggle; but, on this occasion, they ranged themselves on the side of the Bhangis. This powerful combination was more than Mahán Singh could withstand: his forces were defeated, while Brij Ráj was compelled to pay tribute to the victorious *misls*.

A few months later, the Kanheyas, finding that the stipulated tribute was not forthcoming, invited the Sukárchakias to join them in raiding the capital of Brij Ráj. Forgetful of his pledge, Mahán Singh signified his readiness to take part in the expedition. He lost no time in making his preparations; and such was the speed of his movements that he entered Jammu, sacked the town and the surrounding villages, and departed with his plunder, before the Kanheyas appeared on the scene. Jai Singh, the Kanheya chief, enraged at this breach of faith,



led his forces against Mahán Singh, and defeated him with considerable loss, annexing, at the same time, a large portion of his territory. Realizing that he had more than met his match, Mahán Singh sought and obtained the support of the Rámgharia *misl*, which had also suffered loss of territory at the hands of the Kanheyas; and, thus strengthened, he fell upon Jai Singh at Batála, and the allied forces gained a complete victory. The Kanheya chief was forced to restore to the Sukárchakias and the Rámgharias all their lost possessions, and he only escaped further penalties by bestowing on Ranjít Singh the hand of his granddaughter Mahtáb Kour, whose father had been killed in the battle of Batála.

The remaining eight years of Mahán Singh's brief career (he died in 1792 at the age of twenty-seven) were devoted to the extension of the influence and possessions of the Sukárchakia *misl*. He waged unceasing war against the Bhangis, and overcame many of the sirdars who held lands in the neighbourhood of his capital, Gujránwála. His most formidable opponent was a Bhangi sirdar named Sahib Singh, to whom he had formerly given his sister in marriage. This chieftain he engaged in many conflicts, and finally laid siege to his capital, Gujrat, on the banks of the Chenáb. While directing operations he was taken suddenly ill, and his troops, finding themselves without their leader, lost heart and abandoned the siege. Mahán Singh was conveyed to Gujránwála, where he died three days later. He left to his son and successor a state beset by

dangers; but he bequeathed to him at the same time the qualities by which dangers are best overcome—courage combined with a natural genius for command, and enterprise tempered by prudence and foresight.

## CHAPTER V.

### RISE TO POWER OF RANJÍT SINGH.

MAHÁRÁJA RANJÍT SINGH was born at Gujránwála on November 2, 1780. In his early infancy he was attacked by smallpox in its most virulent form. Huge sums of money were distributed in charity and in gifts to temples and holy men in the hope of averting the doom which threatened him. For many days his life was despaired of, but at length the fever abated, and the iron constitution which in later life stood him in such good stead enabled him to triumph over the disease, though he was left permanently disfigured, and with the loss of his left eye. When Mahán Singh died, the future Lion of the Punjab was but twelve years old, and the affairs of the *misl* were conducted by his mother, Ráj Kour, a woman of weak character and dissolute habits. Ranjít Singh owed little of his future greatness to his early training. His education was utterly neglected, and he grew to manhood without learning either to read or write. All the knowledge he gained in his childhood related to field sports and the art of war, in both of which he displayed the daring and ability which marked his subsequent career.

Before he had reached the age of ten he had already accompanied his father on military expeditions, and on more than one occasion had been in imminent danger of his life.

Ranjít Singh soon grew impatient of his mother's control. Her mismanagement of the *misl*, and the intrigues in which she became involved, afforded him a reasonable pretext for taking the reins of government into his own hands. At the age of sixteen he proclaimed the regency at an end, and himself the uncontrolled chief of the Sukárchakias. Ráj Kour was confined in a neighbouring fortress, where, shortly afterwards, she died.

But Ranjít Singh's independence was not complete. His mother was gone; but his mother-in-law, a woman of a very different stamp, remained to be reckoned with; and her influence he was not yet in a position to treat with contempt. Sada Kour was the daughter of Jai Singh, and on the latter's death she had succeeded to the command of the great Kanheya confederacy. She was a masterful, unscrupulous, and ambitious woman; but she possessed both courage and ability, and on several occasions proved herself a valuable ally to her youthful son-in-law. Her real aim was to render the whole of the Punjab subject to her own dominion; and she sought, by keeping Ranjít Singh under her control, to make his power subservient to her plans. But she mistook both the nature and the capabilities of her son-in-law. The Lion of the Punjab had no intention of becoming a stepping-stone for others; and Sada Kour soon found that the rôle she had

designed for him was the very one she was destined to play herself.

Having assumed the leadership of the Sukárchakias, Ranjít Singh's first and chief desire was to gain possession of Lahore, which the Sikhs had long regarded as the political centre of their community. The city, though nominally under the dominion of the ruler of Afghanistan, was held by the Bhangi confederacy, in whose hands it had remained since its capture in 1764 by the two Bhangi sirdars, Lehna Singh and Gujar Singh. It was now being governed, or rather misgoverned, by Lehna Singh's three sons, and Ranjít Singh had been given to understand that the inhabitants would rejoice at their overthrow. He deemed, therefore, that the time had come for action; and, as we shall see, fortune, as well as Sada Kour, favoured the enterprise.

Between the years 1795 and 1797, Shah Zeman, who in 1793 had succeeded Timúr on the throne of Afghanistan, had twice invaded India. On each occasion the Sikhs had followed their old tactics, withdrawing with their possessions to the hills on the approach of the Afghan army, seizing every opportunity to impede its movements, and returning to their homes as soon as it had recrossed the Indus. In 1798 Shah Zeman made a third invasion. This time he occupied Lahore, and was taking steps for the recovery of his father's lost provinces, when the hostility of the Shah of Persia recalled him suddenly to Kábul. So hasty was his departure, that he left behind twelve of his guns which he had been unable to carry across the Jhelam, the river being then in



flood, and he sent a message to Ranjít Singh promising him the grant of the city of Lahore if he would recover the guns and convey them to Pesháwar. The request was readily complied with, and the Shah was as good as his word, though the grant meant little more to Ranjít Singh than the permission to take possession of Lahore if he had the power, and to keep it if he could. This, however, was all that he wanted; and armed with the Shah's authority, and supported by Sada Kour and her troops, he appeared before the city. As he had expected, the gates were at once opened to him, the people welcomed him as a deliverer, and the Bhangi sirdars fled without offering a show of resistance.

This achievement aroused bitter jealousy amongst the Sikh sirdars, and a coalition, headed by the Bhangis and Rámgarhias, was formed to wrest Lahore from Ranjít Singh, and to check his growing power. But neither of these things was accomplished; in fact, the coalition defeated its own object. The Mahárája—the title was assumed by Ranjít Singh in 1801—did not wait to be attacked. Placing himself at the head of a large force, he fell upon and subdued one Bhangi stronghold after another; and at last, allying himself with the Ahluwália *misl*, marched against and captured the holy city of Amritsar.<sup>1</sup> The Bhangi confederacy never recovered from this blow; and in the course of a few years all

<sup>1</sup> On this occasion the famous Zamzama gun, which had been captured from Ahmad Shah in 1764, fell into the hands of Ranjít Singh. It was afterwards mounted on the walls of Múltán, and, on the fall of that fortress in 1849, came into the possession of the British. It now stands in front of the Lahore Museum.

its possessions were annexed by Ranjít Singh. The Rámgarhia *misl* lingered on for another decade in semi-independence, and then it, too, was absorbed into what we may now justly term the kingdom of Lahore.

In 1804, Mahárája Ranjít Singh, taking advantage of the dissensions prevailing at the court of Shah Zeman, entered upon a campaign in the north-western portion of the Punjab with the object of wresting from the Afghan ruler his possessions east of the Indus. Crossing the Rávi with a large army, he reduced the town of Jhang, and then, proceeding southward, exacted tribute from Nawáb Muzaffar Khán, the Governor of Múltán. Content for the time with this success, he returned to Lahore and busied himself in bringing into subjection the minor sirdars who held lands in the neighbourhood of his capital. In the following year he again marched westward; but he had not proceeded far when news reached him that Holkár, pursued by General Lake, had taken refuge in Amritsar, and was looking to the Sikhs for support. Realizing the serious consequences which might result from the presence of the Mahratta chief in his dominions, he at once abandoned his expedition, and hastened to Amritsar.

The second Mahratta war, which was at this time nearing its termination, had commenced in 1802. Before the close of 1803, the battles of Assaye and Argáum in the south, and Aligarh and Laswári in the north, had completely broken the power of Sindhia and of Nágpúr; Delhi was in the hands of

the British ; and Jaswant Rao Holkár was the only Mahratta leader who remained unsubdued. The war seemed practically at an end, when the rout of Colonel Monson's brigade in Central India by the last-named chief completely changed the aspect of affairs. Elated with his success, Holkár marched upon and laid siege to Delhi, which was garrisoned at the time by "a mere handful of sepoy's." The gallantry of the defence went far to wipe out the stain of Monson's defeat. Holkár was forced to raise the siege, and marching southwards with his army, he commenced ravaging the Company's territory between the Jumna and the Sutlej. Before a month had passed, he was utterly routed by General Frazer at Díg ; and at Farukhábád, three days later, a large body of his cavalry was cut to pieces by Lake. Holkár's position was now desperate, and the possibility of a Sikh alliance seemed his only chance of escaping annihilation.

As soon as Ranjít Singh reached Amritsar, a *gurumata*—the last ever held—was called together. Many of the sirdars, including the Mahárája himself, were at first inclined to support Holkár ; but eventually, and mainly through the efforts of the Ahluwália chief, it was decided that the army of the Khálsa should remain neutral. Lake had already reached the banks of the Beas ; and had the bold policy of Lord Wellesley been followed, Holkár must have been finally crushed, and the second Mahratta war would have been the last. But the Monson disaster had created a panic amongst the Directors of the Company. Wellesley was

recalled ; and Lord Cornwallis, armed with the futile policy of non-intervention, was sent out to conclude the war. Instead of crushing Holkár, Cornwallis made terms with him, and restored to him the greater part of the territory he had lost. At the same time, a vague and indefinite treaty was entered into with Ranjít Singh, by which the latter agreed to have no further connections with the Mahratta chief, and to see that he left Amritsar without delay ; while the British Government promised, so long as these conditions were observed, to respect the possessions of the Mahárája, and undertook that no British force should enter his dominions.

This treaty left Ranjít Singh free to carry on his plans for the subjugation of the Punjab ; and as nothing was stipulated regarding the eastern limit of his dominions, he still cherished his project of bringing the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs under his sway. But perhaps the chief interest of the treaty lies in the fact that it was Ranjít Singh's first transaction with the British Government, and brought him for the first time into personal contact with British political and military officers and troops trained and disciplined on Western lines. There is little doubt that this experience, coupled with what he heard from Holkár of European methods of warfare, sowed the seeds of that respect and friendship for the British so strikingly manifested in the later years of his life. Ranjít Singh was a man of shrewd judgment and keen political foresight. He never doubted the permanency of the British power in India, and he foresaw, more clearly than any of

his contemporaries, the greatness of the future that lay before it. He had been brought up to regard the British as his enemies, and some years had still to elapse before this early prejudice was entirely overcome. On this occasion he would, doubtless, have lent his aid to Holkár, had he not seen the folly of engaging in a conflict in which he knew he must eventually be worsted. At the same time, he was not blind to the advantage of having the British for his neighbours. And that advantage was a very great one; for it was the knowledge that his eastern frontier was secure from attack that enabled him, throughout his reign, to devote his entire strength to the extension and consolidation of his power. Had the British been conquered in the second Mahratta war, had Delhi become a Mahratta capital and Málwa a Mahratta country, the building up of the kingdom of Lahore could never have been accomplished—could never even have been attempted.

The Málwa Sikhs, over whom Ranjít Singh was determined, if possible, to extend his dominion, had no sooner been freed from the anarchy which had prevailed during the Mahratta occupation than they commenced quarrelling amongst themselves. As has already been stated, the Phúlkian *misl* was by far the most powerful of the Cis-Sutlej confederacies. Its founder was one Phul, a Ját, whose ancestors had, as early as the eleventh century, migrated from Rájputána to the district of Sirhind. In 1640 Phul became a convert to the Sikh faith. He built a town named after himself, where, under the pro-



tection of the Great Moghul, he lived and flourished, and became the father of seven sons, the ancestors of the reigning families of Patiála, Jínd, Nabbha, and the other minor states of which the *misl* was composed. The leadership was in the hands of the Patiála chief whose ancestor, Ála Singh, had been invested by Ahmad Shah with the governorship of Sirhind and the title of Rája.

Shortly after the conclusion of the treaty above mentioned, a dispute arose between the states of Patiála and Jínd; and the chief of the latter, Rája Bhág Singh, sent a message to Ranjít Singh begging him to come and act as mediator. The invitation exactly suited the Maharája's plans, and was accepted with alacrity. He crossed the Sutlej in July 1806, taking with him an army considerably larger than the peaceful nature of his mission warranted; and, having settled the dispute in question—a task which he performed with much more advantage to himself than to the parties concerned,—he commenced operations on his own account. Ludhiána, a town then held by a Muhammadan chieftain, was seized and plundered by his troops, as was also Ghumgrána, while a number of smaller towns opened their gates to him. In each of his newly acquired possessions he left a sirdar in charge; and by the time he withdrew to his own kingdom, he had established a firm foothold in Cis-Sutlej territory.

The next year a quarrel arose between the Rája of Patiála and his wife, Ráni Aus Kour, and again the question at issue was referred to the ruler of

Lahore for decision, a famous brass cannon and a necklace of diamonds being offered as payment for his services. This time the dispute was ended before the umpire arrived on the scene, and Ranjít Singh had some difficulty in establishing his claim to the promised reward. But the army at his back was a powerful argument in his favour, and the gun and necklace were handed over. As before, the Mahárája turned the occasion to his own advantage, and, ere recrossing the Sutlej, he had reduced the greater portion of the Firozpúr district.

These aggressions were viewed with apprehension both by the British and by the Cis-Sutlej chiefs. The latter had no desire to accept the ruler of the Punjab as their overlord, and to preserve their independence, which they regarded as the birth-right of every true Sikh, they decided to appeal to the British Government for protection. Accordingly, a deputation, headed by the chiefs of Jínd and Patiála, was dispatched to Delhi to lay their cause before Mr. Seton, the Resident. Had the policy of the British not been influenced by other and weightier causes, there is no doubt that the request of the chiefs would have been fully complied with, and steps would then and there have been taken to confine Ranjít Singh to the north of the Sutlej. But the dread of Napoleon and his scheme for the establishment of a French-Indian empire was, at this time, the dominating factor in Asiatic politics. In the council chamber at Calcutta the possibility of a French invasion influenced the decisions on all questions of foreign policy, and

particularly those relating to native states and their rulers, on whose aid Napoleon was said to be counting for the success of his enterprise.

In these circumstances, the request of the Cis-Sutlej deputation caused the British Government no little embarrassment. Ranjít Singh's ambition to extend his authority over the entire Sikh community was well known. To thwart this ambition would be to make an enemy of one whose friendship was, at this juncture, of paramount importance. On the other hand, to refuse the protection asked for would mean abandoning a number of friendly states to a neighbouring power whose disposition had yet to be tested. The reply to the deputation, though straightforward, was cautious and vague. It practically amounted to this: We can promise nothing definite; but you have our sympathy, and we will do what we can.

To Ranjít Singh the tactics of Napoleon were of no great concern, except in so far as they enhanced the value of his friendship in the eyes of the English. His main desire at this time was to extend his dominion to the banks of the Jumna. He knew that the British Government viewed his project with strong disfavour, and that they were well able to prevent its accomplishment. But he hoped to obtain by diplomacy what he was too weak to take by force; and the prospect, remote or otherwise, of a French invasion added considerably to his chances of success. He had, himself, no desire to see the French enter India, nor any intention of taking sides with them if they did. But these

feelings he was careful to conceal, for he was determined, if the English wanted his assistance, to make them pay for it.

The reply to the deputation, however unsatisfactory it may have seemed to the Málwa chiefs, caused no little anxiety to Ranjít Singh, and he hastily summoned the Phúlkian Rájás to his own court, where he did his best to convince them of his goodwill, and to induce them to break off their connection with the British. Their conference was still in progress when intelligence was received of the approach of an envoy from the British Government, whose mission, as Ranjít Singh was fully aware, was to conclude a defensive alliance against the supposed designs of Napoleon. It was arranged that the meeting should take place at Kasúr, on the banks of the Sutlej, and there the Mahárája encamped, surrounded by a large army.

The envoy to whom these negotiations had been entrusted was Mr. C. T. Metcalfe, then a young man of twenty-three, but, as subsequent events proved, a born diplomatist. His reception by the Mahárája was marked by courtesy not amounting to cordiality. He lost no time in stating the object of his mission, and Ranjít Singh declared himself ready to enter into the proposed alliance on condition that the Jumna was recognized as the eastern limit of his territory. With such a condition Mr. Metcalfe had no power to comply; nor was he able to hold out any hope that his Government would view it with favour. As the negotiations proceeded, the attitude of Ranjít Singh grew less uncompromising; and



Mr. Metcalfe had already written to inform the Governor-General that a satisfactory solution was probable, when, without any announcement of his intentions, the Mahárája broke up his camp and marched his army across the Sutlej.

Paying no heed to the remonstrances of the British envoy, Ranjít Singh proceeded to seize whatever he could of Cis-Sutlej territory. Farídkót was occupied, and then Ambála; and tribute was exacted from Maler Kotla, Shahábád, Thánesur, and other towns of importance in the Patiála district. For two months Ranjít Singh remained in Cis-Sutlej territory, and then returned to Amritsar, where he was speedily rejoined by Mr. Metcalfe. In the meantime, news of a more reassuring nature had come from Europe. The great struggle in the Peninsula had commenced, and the danger of a French invasion of India was no longer regarded as imminent. It was now the turn of the British to dictate terms; and Ranjít Singh was informed that the Government had definitely decided to take the Cis-Sutlej chiefs under its protection. He was also given to understand that he must abandon whatever he had seized during his recent raid, and withdraw all his troops to the north of the Sutlej. Such possessions as he had held on the southern side of the river previous to the commencement of the negotiations he would be permitted to retain, but on the same terms as had been granted to the Málwa chiefs. For the rest, the river Sutlej would be recognized as the boundary of his territory, and beyond it he would be subject to no interference of any kind.



For a long time Ranjít Singh declined to accept an alliance based on such terms. He even made preparations for war; and a force under Colonel Ochterlony was sent across the Jumna to hold him in check. In the end, however, wiser considerations prevailed. The approach of Colonel Ochterlony convinced him that the British were in earnest, and he was growing apprehensive lest the unsubdued chiefs of the Punjab should follow the example of those of Málwa, and seek British protection. At the same time an incident took place in the envoy's camp which still further inclined him to a peaceable settlement. It was the month of Muharram, and the Muhammadan retainers of the envoy were engaged in celebrating the festival with the customary procession, when they were attacked by a large body of Akális. Mr. Metcalfe was forced to call out his escort, which, though it consisted only of two companies of native infantry and sixteen troopers, completely routed the Akális, who outnumbered them by ten to one. The Maharája profusely apologized for the outrage, complimented Mr. Metcalfe on the bravery of his soldiers, and sent a detachment of his own troops to guard the envoy's camp. The affair made a deep impression on Ranjít Singh, and convinced him of the unfitness of his own ill-organized levies to oppose the disciplined armies of the British.

Having once made up his mind to comply with the terms offered him, Ranjít Singh lost no time in recalling his troops to the Punjab, and on April 25, 1809, the treaty was signed. It was by

no means a bad bargain for the Sikh ruler; for, though forced to abandon all hope of Cis-Sutlej supremacy, he had the enormous advantage of knowing that, from that time forward, he would never be called upon to defend his eastern frontier. For this his sole guarantee was the word of the British Government; but the character of the recent negotiations had taught him that that word was to be relied upon. He loyally abided by the terms of the treaty, and from the moment he signed it he became the firm and devoted friend of the paramount power.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONQUEST OF THE PUNJAB.

THE kingdom of Lahore was now firmly established, though twenty years of hard and constant fighting were yet to intervene ere its ruler could claim the title, Lord of the Punjab. The northern and central districts, together with the provinces of Múltán, Pesháwar, and Kashmír, were still in the hands of Muhammadan chiefs and governors, while many even of the Sikh sirdars remained unsubdued. In the present chapter we shall briefly trace the steps by which Ranjít Singh extended his power, westward up to and even beyond the banks of the Indus, southwards to Múltán, and northwards to the borders of Tibet. It was not a series of easy victories, but of fierce and stubborn contests, which a leader with less determination than Ranjít Singh could never have won. That the Sikhs venerate the memory of their great Maharája is little to be wondered at: his conquest of the Punjab was an achievement of which Napoleon himself, with the same means at his disposal, might have been proud.

In his talent for military organization Ranjít Singh stands supreme amongst Indian leaders, though others

have equalled him in personal courage and surpassed him in generalship. But if he owed much of his success to the skill of his commanders, it was he himself who created the army which made success possible. The manner in which Mr. Metcalfe's escort met and repulsed the attack of his fanatical Akális had shown him the effect of discipline on the Indian soldier, and he at once made up his mind to train his own army on European lines. He formed his men into battalions, dressed them in red coats with facings to distinguish the different regiments, and with the aid of instructors from the Indian army equipped and drilled them after the manner of Western troops. The men were well paid, and the chances of plunder being many, the service rapidly became popular. In addition to the regular army, which, at the time of Ranjít Singh's death, consisted of some 30,000 men with 200 guns, there was a considerable force of irregular cavalry composed of the contingents of the Sikh sirdars. The strength of this force varied, but at times equalled, or even exceeded, that of the regular army. Each contingent was armed and accoutred after its own fashion; and when massed together on parade, they constituted by far the most picturesque portion of the Sikh army. The appearance of one of these contingents is thus described by Baron Hügel: "The strange troop before me was most peculiarly Indian. The uniform consisted of a velvet coat or gaberdine, over which most of them wore a shirt of mail. A belt round the waist, richly embroidered in gold, supported the powder horn covered with cloth of gold, as well as the Persian *katár* and the pistols

which many of them carried in addition to these weapons. Some wore a steel helmet, inlaid with gold and surmounted with a *kalgi* or black heron's plume; others wore a cap of steel worked like the cuirass in rings; this cap lies firmly on the turban, and covers the whole head, having openings for the eyes. The left arm is often covered from the hand to the elbow with a steel cuff inlaid with gold. The round Sikh shield hangs at the back, fastened with straps across the chest, a quiver at the right side and a bow slung at the back being carried as part of the equipment; a bag made in the belt holds the balls; and a tall bayonet, frequently ornamented with gold, held in the right hand when the man is on foot, and carried over the shoulder when in the saddle, completes the costume.”<sup>1</sup>

The artillery, next to the infantry the most important arm, was thoroughly reorganized. The Maharája placed great dependence on this section of his army, and personally superintended its training and equipment. The guns, most of them of brass, were cast in his own foundries at Lahore, and with them the Sikhs made excellent practice. Later on, Ranjít Singh took into his service a number of foreign officers, some of them men of considerable note, who had fought in the Napoleonic wars. General Ventura, an Italian officer of distinction, held for many years the command of the *Fouj Khás*, or household troops, the most famous and efficient brigade in the Khálsa army. The same officer held the post of Governor of Lahore. General Allard, a

<sup>1</sup> *Travels in Kashmír and the Punjab*, by Baron Hügel, p. 331.



Frenchman, raised and commanded a regiment of dragoons which formed part of the *Fouj Khás*. General Court commanded the Gurkha regiments, and Colonel Gardner, an Irishman, was employed in the artillery. Altogether Ranjít Singh employed some twenty European officers, some of whom, like General Avitabile, who was placed in charge of the Pesháwar district, were employed in administrative work. They were all well paid, and enjoyed the consideration and confidence of the Mahárája. On the death of the latter the majority of them resigned, or were dismissed by the sirdars, who became jealous of their powers. The employment of these officers increased enormously the efficiency of Ranjít Singh's army, and had not a little to do with the success of his later campaigns, though the chief command in time of war, if not taken by himself, was always entrusted to one of his own sirdars. Amongst the latter there were generals of great ability, such as Diwán Mokham Chand, who was commander-in-chief from 1806 till his death in 1814; Misr Diwán Chand, who captured Múltán in 1818; Sirdar Attar Singh, known for his great strength and courage as the champion of the Khálsa; Sirdar Fateh Singh, Sirdar Hari Singh, and many others.

After the conclusion of the treaty with the British, Ranjít Singh first turned his attention to the hill-fortress of Kangra, which the Gurkhas, under their leader Ummar Singh, were then endeavouring to wrest from its rightful possessor, Rájá Sansar Chand of Katoch. The Rájá, hard pressed, and worn out by a long siege, called on the Sikhs to assist him, a step

which he must afterwards have bitterly regretted, for Ranjít Singh straightway led his army into the hills, and ended the dispute by taking possession of the fortress himself. Had Sansar Chand held out a little longer, the Gurkhas, who were equally worn out, would probably have abandoned the siege. The unlucky chief died soon afterwards; but it was not until 1829 that Katoch and the other states of the Kangra districts were finally annexed to the territory of Lahore.

On his return to his capital, Ranjít Singh was met by Shah Shuja, the exiled monarch of Afghanistan, who, having been ousted from his throne by his brother Mahmúd, had crossed the Indus in search of any assistance that might be forthcoming. Ranjít Singh, foreseeing that the ex-king's influence might be of use to him, offered him an asylum at Lahore, which was accepted, and discussed a proposal for a joint attack on Múltán. But Shah Shuja did not remain long at the Sikh capital. An unexpected offer of assistance tempted him to march on Pesháwar, which he seized and for a time succeeded in holding. But Fateh Khán, Mahmúd's wazír, and the virtual ruler of his kingdom, soon drove him out again; and after an unsuccessful attempt to win over Muzaffar Khán, the Governor of Múltán, the royal exile was captured by the Governor of Attock, who sent him to Kashmír, where for twelve months he was kept in confinement.

The misfortunes of Shah Shuja in no way affected Ranjít Singh's determination to seize Múltán; and in February 1810 a strong force under Diwán Mokham

Chand was dispatched for its reduction. The Sikhs were soon in possession of the town; but the citadel, gallantly defended by Nawáb Muzaffar Khán, defied all their efforts. Mokham Chand was obliged through illness to relinquish the command; and at the end of a month, every general capable of taking the lead having been slain, Ranjít Singh made terms with the Nawáb and raised the siege, the latter engaging to pay him two and a half lakhs of rupees.

The remainder of this year was spent in bringing under subjection the Muhammadan tribes of the central and western Punjab, a task which, for many years, occupied the Mahárája's spare time. These tribes included the Ghakkars, Tiwánas, Awáns,<sup>1</sup> and many other warlike clans, who, had they been able to combine under a single leader, might have formed themselves into a power which it would have taxed the utmost resources of the ruler of Lahore to overcome. As it was, Ranjít Singh was able to proceed against them singly, and their subjugation was, in consequence, merely a matter of time.

Early in 1811, the Mahárája turned his eyes in the direction of Kashmír, the annexation of which was one of the main objects of his ambition. Since the downfall of the Moghul empire, the province had been under the sway of the Duráni kings of Afghanistan, having been conquered in 1752 by Ahmad Shah. It was governed at this time by an officer named Atta Muhammad Khán, of whose allegiance the new Shah entertained considerable doubt, and the fact that Shah Shuja was now a captive in his hands

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C.

did not tend to allay the suspicion with which he was regarded. It happened, therefore, that while Ranjít Singh was arranging his plan of campaign, preparations for a similar expedition were being made by Shah Mahmúd, or rather by his all-powerful minister, Fateh Khán.

Ranjít Singh commenced operations by subduing the hill-states of Bhimbar and Rajáori, situated to the west and north-west of Jammu, which latter place, it will be remembered, had been reduced by his father, Mahán Singh; and it was while he was thus engaged that he became aware that the quarry he was hunting was also being pursued by Fateh Khán. Neither party desired to come to blows, and neither was inclined to advance into the hills with the possibility of having its retreat cut off by the other. There was but one alternative. The leaders met and agreed to finish the hunt together, and divide the spoil. On this understanding the parties advanced, each having made a mental reservation to outwit the other if the opportunity offered.

The expedition now became a race for Kashmír, and Fateh Khán won. The Sikhs were no match for the Afghans when it came to mountaineering, and a heavy fall of snow added to their difficulties. Diwán Mokham Chand, with a few picked troops, pressed on in advance of the main body; but by the time he had descended into the valley of Kashmír, all resistance had been overcome by the Afghan troops. Fateh Khán, on the ground that the Sikhs had taken no part in the fighting, refused them their share of the plunder, and the only prize that Mokham Chand



carried back to Lahore was the person of Shah Shuja, whom Fateh Khán had allowed to slip through his fingers.

Ranjít Singh was justly enraged at the manner in which he had been duped ; and, by way of vengeance, entered into negotiations with the Governor of Attock, one of the most important posts on the Afghan frontier, and induced him to surrender it to a Sikh force. Fateh Khán immediately set out with his army to recover the fort, leaving his brother Azím Khán in charge of Kashmír. Diwán Mokham Chand, who had been sent from Lahore to the relief of the Sikh garrison, encountered the wazír at Haidáru, a few miles to the north of Attock, and for the first time in their history the Sikhs had the satisfaction of defeating the troops of the Shah in a pitched battle. Fateh Khán was forced to withdraw to Kábul, and Attock remained in the possession of Ranjít Singh.

On the whole, the ruler of Lahore had no reason to be dissatisfied with the results of the Kashmír expedition. The moral effect of his victory over the troops of the Shah was worth even more to him than the fort of Attock, in itself a valuable acquisition ; while the capture of Shah Shuja resulted in his gaining possession of the Koh-i-nur diamond, valued at that time at close on a million sterling. This famous stone, taken originally from the mines of Kollúr, was, in 1656, presented by Mír Jumla, at that time Vizier of Golconda,<sup>1</sup> to the Emperor Shah

<sup>1</sup> Mír Jumla, before joining the service of Aurangzeb, had farmed the mines at Kollúr and other places.



Jahán. In 1739, it formed part of the plunder which Nádir Shah carried away with him to Persia. On the murder of the Shah at Kelát in 1747, it passed to his grandson, Shah Rukh, by whom, four years later, it was presented to Ahmad Shah, the founder of the Duráni dynasty at Kábul. It came into the possession of Shah Zeman in 1793, and of Shah Shuja in 1795. As to the means by which Ranjít Singh induced his captive to part with the diamond accounts differ. There is no doubt, however, that Shah Shuja held on to his treasure as long as he could, and that he eventually handed it over as the price of the Mahárája's friendship. According to Sir J. D. Cunningham, the latter, after much chaffering, "visited the Shah in person, mutual friendship was declared, an exchange of turbans took place, the diamond was surrendered, and the Shah received the assignment of a *jaghír* in the Punjab for his maintenance, and a promise of aid in recovering Kábul."<sup>1</sup> Even after the bargain had been struck, Shah Shuja found his position at Lahore too like that of a prisoner to be pleasant. He therefore contrived to make his escape; and after a brief refuge with the chief of Rajáori, found his way across the Sutlej to Ludhiána, where he was received by the British Government, if not with open arms, at least with kindness, and was granted a pension of Rs. 4,000 a month for his maintenance.

Ranjít Singh's next attempt on Kashmír, made the following year, 1814, ended in disaster. Emboldened by his recent victory and by the knowledge that

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*, p. 161.

Fateh Khán was well out of the way, he determined to try conclusions with Azím Khán. This time, owing to the ill-health of Diwán Mokham Chand, he led the expedition in person. Acting on the advice of the chief of Rajáori, he divided his force into two portions, which advanced into the valley by different routes. The result was calamitous. Ere the two divisions could unite, the foremost was met and completely routed by Azím Khán, and Ranjít Singh was forced to order a general retreat. In the meantime the hill-chiefs had risen behind him, and it was only with great difficulty that he was able to fight his way back to Lahore. Soon afterwards Fateh Khán rejoined his brother Azím; and Ranjít Singh wisely determined, as far as Kashmír was concerned, to hold his ambition in check and bide his time.

The condition of affairs at Kábul<sup>1</sup> made it unlikely that Fateh Khán would absent himself for any long period from the side of his feeble lord and master. The Bárakzai brothers, of whom he was the eldest, were now the dominant power in Afghanistan; and for some years to come their doings kept the Eastern world in a state of ferment. Dost Muhammad Khán, the most capable of them all, and the founder of the present Bárakzai dynasty, was the governor of the provinces of Ghazni and Kábul; Kashmír was held by Azím Khán, and Pesháwar by Yár Muhammad Khán; while Shah Mahmúd was a puppet in the hands of his skilful and crafty wazír. It was obvious that the downfall of the Duráni dynasty was imminent, and in the scramble for power that was bound to

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

ensue, Ranjít Singh knew that his opportunity would come. He had only to wait four years.

In the meantime, there was plenty of work for the Sikh army to do. Between the years 1815 and 1819, operations were carried on against the tribes lying between the Chenáb and the Indus, of whom the most formidable were the Ghakkars and the Tiwánas. The former were finally subdued in 1818, and the latter, one of the bravest of the Punjab races, were driven out of their chief stronghold. The Tiwánas made a gallant struggle for independence; and it was not till 1821 that their chief, Ahmad Yár Khán, tendered his submission. But the greatest triumph of this period was the capture of Múltán, which was effected in the year 1818.

This city, which had so long defied the forces of the Khálsa, was still held by the redoubtable Nawáb Muzaffar Khán, to whose keeping it had been entrusted by Ahmad Shah in 1779. In 1816, and again in the following year, Ranjít Singh attempted to carry the fortress by storm; but on both occasions his attack was repulsed, and he was forced, as in 1810, to retire with such tribute as he could exact. Nothing daunted, he prepared for a third attempt in which his full strength was to be put forth; and in the beginning of 1818, Múltán was invested by an army of 18,000 men. Muzaffar Khán's force numbered but 2,000, and with this he determined to defend his citadel to the last. The Sikhs were commanded by the Mahárája's son, Kharak Singh, then a lad of sixteen, the siege operations being in the charge of General Misr Diwán Chand. The

bombardment lasted for four months, during which time many assaults were repulsed. When the major portion of the defence works had been demolished, and the gates of the fortress had been blown in, Ranjít Singh offered Muzaffar Khán a *jágír*<sup>1</sup> if he would surrender without further opposition; but the offer was unheeded. The final assault was made on June 2nd. It was led by an Akáli named Sadhu Singh, who with a band of his desperate followers stormed the battered defences, while the main body of the Sikhs forced an entry through the gateway. The garrison, reduced to barely three hundred men, was soon overpowered. The brave old Nawáb, with four of his sons, made a last stand at the door of his residence, where he fell sword in hand, having held Múltán against all comers for close on forty years. Everything of value in the city was seized upon by the Sikh soldiers; but on the return of the army to Lahore, Ranjít Singh compelled them to disgorge their plunder into the State treasury.

Whilst these events were taking place, Fateh Khán was summoned to Herát to repel a Persian invasion; and in 1819 news arrived that he had been assassinated by Prince Kamrán, the son of Mahmúd Shah. Azím Khán no sooner heard of his brother's death than he hastened to Kábul, leaving another brother, Jabbar Khán, in charge of Kashmír. On reaching Afghanistan, he defeated the troops of the Shah, dislodged his garrisons from Kábul, Ghazni, and Kandahár, and made himself master of the whole

<sup>1</sup> *Jágír* (Persian *já*, a place; *gír*, to hold), a grant of land made by the Government as a reward for good service.



country east of the plains of Herát, where Mahmúd was left clinging to the remnants of his authority. For the sake of appearances, Azím set up a king in Kábul, in the person of Ayúb Khán; but his title was Ayúb's only kingly attribute.

Ranjít Singh's opportunity had now come, and he was not slow to take advantage of it. Part of the garrison of Kashmír had accompanied Azím Khán to Kábul, and the force which was now dispatched from Lahore under Diwán Misr Chand was more than sufficient to overcome the troops left with Jabbar Khán. The latter did, indeed, make a show of resistance, but he was soon forced to take refuge in flight, and the valley of Kashmír was left in the possession of the conqueror of Múltán. The province was formally annexed to the dominions of the ruler of Lahore, and Moti Rám, the son of Diwán Mokham Chand, was appointed its first governor. The news of these events was received with the greatest joy at Lahore and Amritsar, and for three nights both cities were illuminated.

The next year saw the commencement of the long struggle between Lahore and Afghanistan for the possession of Pesháwar. But before passing on to this the last of Ranjít Singh's campaigns, we must briefly refer to another event which took place at this time—namely, the downfall of the famous Sada Kour, through whose support Ranjít Singh had been enabled, in the early years of his career, to shake off his mother's control, and to make himself master of Lahore and Amritsar. It had been Sada Kour's hope that her daughter would bear Ranjít Singh a son, and



that thereby the importance of her own position would be assured. When, however, years passed by without the desired development taking place, she resolved to take matters into her own hands; and, during one of her son-in-law's military expeditions, she procured a boy, whom she named Sher Singh, and passed him off as her daughter's child. Ranjit Singh was anxious at that time to avoid a breach with Sada Kour; and on his return to Lahore, though fully aware of the fraud that had been practised on him, treated Sher Singh like a son, and allowed him the title of prince.

In 1820, when the so-called prince had reached his twelfth year, Sada Kour requested that an estate suitable to his rank might be granted him. The Mahārāja was not unwilling to promote the welfare of a youth whose good looks and high spirits had already won his favour, but he was by no means disposed to advance the position and influence of his ambitious mother-in-law. He accordingly suggested to her that she should relinquish the management of her own lands (the remains of the Kanheya estates), and make them over to her grandson. This the old lady resolutely declined to do; and then, in fear of the consequences of her refusal, she left Lahore by night in a covered litter, and endeavoured to make her way into Cis-Sutlej territory. The troopers of the Mahārāja were soon in pursuit, and before she had covered half the distance to the Sutlej, Sada Kour was captured and brought back to Lahore. A few days later she was confined in a neighbouring fortress, where she passed the remainder of her days. Ranjit

Singh annexed the whole of her lands, of which he granted a portion, including the town of Batála, in *jágír* to Sher Singh.

Previous to the capture of Kashmír, Ranjít Singh had seized and occupied Pesháwar; but the town was soon after recovered, and was in 1820 held by Yár Muhammad Khán. The Maharája now determined to regain his hold on the frontier province; and as a preliminary measure an ambassador was dispatched to Yár Muhammad with a demand for tribute, a demand which the latter, remembering Haidáru, deemed it expedient to comply with. This transaction was duly reported at Kábul; and Azím Khán, enraged that a Bárakzai chief should enter into a subordinate alliance with the Sikh ruler, the sworn enemy of his race and country, marched at the head of a large army to Pesháwar, with a view to restoring his authority and the credit of his family. The Yuzafzai tribes, ever ready for a *jihád* against the unbelievers, joined him *en route*, and made a formidable addition to his strength. The Sikhs advanced from Attock in two divisions, one on either side of the Kábul river: those on the left bank, under the personal command of the Maharája, to oppose the Yuzafzais; and those on the right, under Sirdar Hari Singh Nalwa and General Ventura, to do battle against the troops of Azím Khán. The fight took place some twenty miles from Attock; and on both sides of the river the Sikhs were equally successful, though on the left bank the struggle was fierce and bloody. Azím withdrew to Kábul, and the Sikhs entered Pesháwar unopposed. Having sacked the city and the villages

of the Khaibar, the Mahárája reopened negotiations with Yár Muhammad Khán. The hostile spirit of the surrounding tribes rendered Pesháwar a difficult place to hold, and he decided, for the time being, to reinstate Yár Muhammad, who, having little to hope for at the hands of his brother, willingly became the tributary of Lahore. Azím Khán did not long survive his defeat, and his death in 1823 produced further confusion in the affairs of Afghanistan. The Bárakzai brothers were now without any acknowledged head, and their quarrels led to a period of uninterrupted anarchy.

During the three succeeding years, no operations of importance were undertaken by the Sikh army. This unwonted inactivity was mainly due to the ill-health of the Mahárája, who, for the greater part of 1825, lay sick in Amritsar. Towards the end of 1826, a serious rising took place amongst the Yuzafzais and other tribes in the neighbourhood of Pesháwar, who, stirred to action by a Wahábi leader, Sayad Ahmad Shah, made an attempt to drive the Sikhs out of Hazára. This district, lying to the north of Ráwal Pindi, and enclosed between the Indus and the hills of Kashmír, was brought under Sikh control by the subjugation of the Ghakkars in 1818, and had proved a continual source of trouble to its possessors. The Mahárája went himself to the assistance of the governor, Sirdar Hari Singh Nalwa, and having defeated the tribesmen with great loss, he marched on to Pesháwar to punish the governor for conniving at the designs of the Wahábi leader. The tribute of Pesháwar was increased, and

Yár Muhammad's son was carried to Lahore as a hostage.

In 1829, the Sayad again collected the tribesmen round his standard, this time for an attack on Pesháwar, in order to punish the governor for his submission to the Sikh unbeliever. When his assailant descended the hills, Yár Muhammad marched out and attacked him. But he lost both the battle and his life, and Pesháwar was only saved from capture by the timely arrival of General Ventura. With his disciplined troops, the general had little difficulty in scattering the fanatical followers of Sayad Ahmad, after which he entered Pesháwar, and conferred the governorship on Sultán Muhammad Khán, the brother of Yár Muhammad. But the Sayad was not yet done with. No sooner had General Ventura departed, than he once more swooped down on Pesháwar; and before any steps could be taken to oppose him, he had driven out Sultán Muhammad and made himself master of the city. This necessitated the dispatch of another Sikh force, which set out early in 1830. Sayad Ahmad evacuated Pesháwar on its approach, but for a year longer maintained a desultory warfare in the surrounding hills. He was then defeated and slain by Hari Singh Nalwa, and Sultán Muhammad was reinstated as tributary governor.

Ranjít Singh was beginning to find his vassal province an expensive luxury. The tribute he had received from Sultán Muhammad and his predecessor was considerably less than the amount he had spent in protecting them; and when later he discovered



that Sultán Muhammad was even less trustworthy than his brother, he came to the conclusion that the cheapest and safest way of dealing with Pesháwar would be to annex it and administer it himself. This, however, was not a step to be taken in a hurry. Pesháwar was still, in name at least, a province of Afghanistan; and its occupation by the Sikhs would undoubtedly lead to a conflict with Dost Muhammad Khán, who by this time was firmly seated on the throne of the Duráni kings, and who was, as Ranjít Singh well knew, the strongest ruler who had occupied that throne for many generations.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that Ranjít Singh lent a sympathetic ear to a proposal made to him at this time by his old friend Shah Shuja. For reasons best known to himself, the Duráni exile had decided that 1833 was the year in which he was destined to regain his lost inheritance. He first appealed for assistance to his British protectors; but he was informed that the British Government, though it had no intention of interfering with his enterprise and would even be glad to see it succeed, could not do otherwise than remain neutral. Shah Shuja, therefore, laid his plans before Ranjít Singh. His intention was to march through Sind, and having persuaded the Amírs of that country to join his standard, to make for Kábul by way of Kandahár. In return for the assistance of the Sikh ruler, he promised, on his restoration to power, to abandon his claims on Pesháwar and all other possessions held by his ancestors east of the Indus. Ranjít Singh had no very ardent desire



to see Shah Shuja regain his throne, and no belief that he would keep his promises if he did. But his attempt to do so, whether successful or not, would for a time at least occupy the attention and resources of Dost Muhammad Khán, and thereby render the Sikh occupation of Pesháwar a comparatively easy undertaking. Moreover, if Shah Shuja was again to become the ruler of Afghanistan, it was just as well that he should owe his throne to Sikh assistance. Accordingly, Ranjít Singh, having ascertained that his action would not be regarded as unfriendly by the British Government, promised his co-operation, and the Afghan expedition was fitted out at his expense.

It is unnecessary to follow in detail the fortunes of Shah Shuja. His attempt to win over the Amírs of Sind was a signal failure, and it was only by the force of arms that he was able to extract from them either money or supplies. In Afghanistan he was for a time more successful. He defeated the Kandahár forces, and had almost effected an entry into the town when Amír Dost Muhammad, at the head of a large army, came to its relief. A fierce battle followed in which the Amír was victorious. Shah Shuja fled from the field, and with the remnants of his expedition found his way, through Baluchistan and Sind, back to Ludhiána. Better fortune attended Ranjít Singh. While Bárakzai and Duráni were struggling for supremacy under the walls of Kandahár, a Sikh force of 8,000 men, led by Sirdar Hari Singh, set out for Pesháwar. The Bárakzai governor, who might have held out had



AMÍR DOST MUHAMMAD.

*(Portraits of the Princes and Peoples of India, by the Hon. Emily Eden.)*

there been any chance of relief from Kábul, deserted his charge, and the Sikhs took possession of the city almost without striking a blow.

The Mahárája had had quite enough of tributary governors. Pesháwar was made a part of the kingdom of Lahore, and Sirdar Hari Singh was left in command of the town and province. But Dost Muhammad had no intention of leaving the Sikh lion in peaceful possession of his prey, and from that time forward the recovery of Pesháwar was an object for which he never ceased to strive. His first invasion of the district took place in 1835, and might have been successful but for the skilful part played by Azzíz-ud-dín, Ranjít Singh's most trusted counsellor, who contrived to open negotiations with Amír Dost Muhammad and thereby delay his advance. This gave the Sikhs time for preparation; and they mustered so formidable a force that the Amír deemed discretion the better part of valour, and withdrew his army to Kábul. To guard against a second surprise, the Sikhs the following year established a fortress at Jamrúd, at the entrance to the Khaibar. This was more than Dost Muhammad could stand; and in April 1837 he dispatched his son, Muhammad Akbar Khán, with a force of over 30,000 men for its reduction. Sirdar Hari Singh lay ill at Pesháwar, but the garrison of Jamrúd, only 800 strong, managed to hold out until he was able to march to its relief. Meanwhile, reinforcements had been sent for from Lahore, where the Mahárája was engaged in celebrating with great pomp the marriage of his grandson, Prince Nao Nihál Singh. All

the troops assembled at the capital in honour of the royal nuptials were at once sent off to the frontier, led by the bridegroom himself and General Ventura. Once more Pesháwar was saved by the arrival, in the nick of time, of a relieving force. A desperate encounter had taken place at Jamrúd, in which the brave Hari Singh fell mortally wounded. The Sikhs, bereft of their leader at the most critical moment of the fight, had been forced back on Pesháwar, where they were immediately besieged. But the Afghans had hardly commenced their attack before the prince and Ventura were upon them. There was no fight to speak of. Backed by the whole might of the Khálsa, the Sikh leaders had little difficulty in convincing Muhammad Akbar that it was time to decamp, and in a short time he and his whole force were in full retreat towards Jalálábád.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ADMINISTRATION AND COURT OF RANJÍT SINGH.

By the end of 1834 there remained not a vestige of Afghan authority east of the Indus. The kingdom of Lahore had reached the zenith of its power and prosperity, and its ruler who, twenty-five years before, was but the chieftain of an insignificant clan, had become a sovereign whose actions were a matter of concern to the world's greatest Powers. But the strength of the Khálsa lay in the strength of Ranjít Singh; and when death removed the sceptre from his hand, the fabric of power, which for close on half a century he had laboured to build up, crumbled to pieces in less than five years. Before passing on to the events which immediately preceded its downfall, let us endeavour to get a closer view of the Sikh monarchy in the days of its glory.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the population of the Punjab numbered, roughly, twenty millions. The Sikhs constituted barely one-tenth of this total. Of the remaining nine-tenths, rather more than half were Muhammadans and the rest Hindus, the latter being more numerous in the south and the former in the north and north-west, whilst the



Sikhs themselves were mainly confined, as they are to-day, to the regions around Lahore, Amritsar, and Jálándhar. As the ruling race, the Sikhs were better treated and enjoyed greater privileges than their Hindu or Muhammadan fellow-subjects: their lands were more lightly assessed, and they were given a readier access to lucrative posts, particularly in the army, the most highly favoured and the best paid service in the State. They regarded Hindus and Muhammadans alike as the enemies of their faith and the legitimate objects of their oppression. They valued them as payers of revenue, and allowed them just sufficient prosperity to enable them to satisfy the demands of the State.

But though the rank and file of these two less favoured communities were in many parts reduced to abject poverty, there were men belonging to both who held offices of high importance at the court of Ranjít Singh. This was the result of necessity rather than choice. The Ját—*and nearly all Sikhs were Ját*—made fine soldiers but poor civil servants; and no one understood their limitations better than the Mahárája. In the army there was no rank which a Ját could not hold with distinction, but he lacked the intellectual qualities essential to success in the field of diplomacy or civil administration. Ranjít Singh is said to have been unusually fortunate in the officers who controlled the various branches of his government; but if he was well served, it was because he had the sagacity to select the right men for his service. If the right man happened to be a Sikh, so much the better; but

if he happened to be a Brahmin or a Mussalman, his alien creed was no bar to his preferment. One of the most prominent officers at the court of Lahore was a Muhammadan named Azzíz-ud-dín. He joined the service of the State as darbar physician, and in course of time rose to be the Maharája's chief and most confidential counsellor. Equally distinguished for his learning, his skill as a diplomatist, and the courtly urbanity of his manners, he became the chief intermediary between the Lahore court and the British Government. He was a staunch upholder of the British alliance; and the manner in which he conducted the business of his chief won the admiration of British officials, and on more than one occasion called forth a warm encomium from the Governor-General.

Rája Dina Náth, another officer of distinction, was a Hindu. Scarcely inferior in attainments to Azzíz-ud-dín, but of a more crafty disposition, he rose in 1834 to the position of Minister of Finance, and both during and after the lifetime of Ranjít Singh his influence over the Sikh sirdars was very great. He enjoyed the full confidence of his master, and in later years of the British Government, who, on the annexation of the Punjab, appointed him to the Council of Regency, where his experience and skill as a revenue officer rendered his services of great value. Of equal importance in the State were the Jammu brothers, Ghuláb Singh, Dhián Singh, and Suchet Singh. These belonged to a family of Dogra Rájputs. They entered the Sikh army as troopers, and by their conspicuous abilities raised themselves

high in the Mahárāja's service. Dhián Singh, as controller of the royal household, was the most influential officer in the State. Ghuláb Singh held a high command in the army, and was afterwards installed by the British Government as the first independent ruler of Kashmír. Suchet Singh held no office of importance, but was a prominent figure at the Mahárāja's court. Amongst other "foreigners" who obtained favour or preferment may be mentioned the two sons of Nawáb Muzaffar Khán, the defender of Múltán, both of whom received pensions and positions at court. Khuda Yár Khán, the chief of the conquered Tiwánas, received like consideration; while *jágírs* and minor appointments were conferred on many lesser chiefs, both Hindu and Muhammadan, who had been forced to surrender their independence.

This liberal policy, though it helped to heal the wounds of the conquered, was viewed with considerable alarm by the Sikh sirdars, who remembered the warnings of Guru Govind Singh, and looked upon the advancement of the Brahmin, the Rájpút, and the Mussalman as a violation of the fundamental principles of their faith, and a menace to the very existence of the Khálsa as the brotherhood of the Sikhs. Towards the end of his life, even Ranjít Singh found it difficult to control the diversified and antagonistic elements of which his court was composed; and when the reins of government passed from his hands to those of his incompetent successor, order speedily gave way to anarchy and bloodshed. The army became supreme, and the rival princes and politicians who endeavoured to buy its support

Gulab  
Singh  
ruler of  
Kashmir

succeeded only in driving it and themselves farther and farther along the road to destruction.

Ranjít Singh's government was a military despotism. The breaking up of the *misl*s changed the whole character of the Sikh constitution. Together with their individual independence, the sirdars lost all share in the direction of the affairs of their community. The *gurumata*, or parliament of the Khálsa, became a thing of the past; the last was called in 1805, and from that time forward the word of the Maharája was the law of the land. The army, almost exclusively composed of Sikhs, was the only effectively organized department in the State, and constituted the ruler's sole instrument for the control of his executive and the enforcement of his decrees. The army was, in fact, the Khálsa, and it was with the Sikh army and not with the peoples of the Punjab that the British were, ten years later, forced into collision. Ranjít Singh kept his impetuous and restive soldiery under control by the maintenance of an iron discipline which they would have been slow to endure at the hands of a less courageous, less able, or less successful leader. That they must get out of hand under Kharak Singh was obvious to all who knew anything of that prince's character; but probably no one foresaw the violence of the storm that was impending.

The revenue of the State amounted at this time to nearly one and a half crores of rupees, or about £1,500,000. Nearly five-sixths of this sum was derived from land revenue, and the remainder from customs and stamp duties. The accumulated incomes



of the *jágírdárs*, who contributed nothing to the State, exceeded a crore of rupees; so that the total resources of the kingdom of the Khálsa amounted, in round figures, to two and a half crores of rupees, or £2,500,000. The average rate of assessment for land was two-fifths of the yearly produce, and was usually paid in kind. The manner in which the assessment was collected was unsystematic and vexatious. The country was divided up into districts, which were leased out to *kárdárs*, or revenue-farmers, who were responsible to the government for the revenues of the areas over which they presided. Within the neighbourhood of the capital, the *kárdárs* were subject to a certain amount of supervision, but in the outlying provinces their rapacity was practically unchecked. Ranjít Singh had himself little taste for, and little time to devote to, the detailed work of civil administration; and provided his exchequer was kept well supplied, he left the department of finance to manage its own affairs. Nevertheless, he kept a watchful eye on the district accounts, and the *kárdár* whose payments were in arrears could count on a swift and sharp punishment.

The *kárdár* was not only a farmer of land revenue; he was also an excise officer, and the chief magistrate of his district. Duties were levied on almost every article in common use, and the poor were as heavily taxed as the rich. The trader, hampered on every side by tolls and State monopolies, was no better off than the cultivator. Both were taxed almost to the limit of endurance, and hence the resources of the country remained un-



developed and commerce was practically non-existent. In his judicial capacity the *kārdār* exercised extensive powers. All civil disputes and criminal cases came under his jurisdiction. For most offences the punishment inflicted took the form of a fine; and though the money thus collected became State property, it can easily be imagined that the *kārdār* found his magisterial duties a source of considerable profit.

But the government of Ranjít Singh, though undoubtedly oppressive, was not altogether unpopular. Whatever its faults, it was a settled government, and that alone was an unwonted luxury in the Punjab. If the people were heavily taxed, they were not taxed out of existence. They had at least a ruler who knew that he could not strengthen himself by ruining his subjects; a ruler who, if he took much from them, gave them in return what was well worth the price they paid—internal peace, and security from foreign invasion.

The gifts which nature lavished on Ranjít Singh were of the abstract rather than the concrete order. His strength of character and personal magnetism, the real sources of his greatness, animated a frame which, had it belonged to one less highly endowed, might have been deemed both mean and unprepossessing. The most authentic descriptions of him relate to his appearance in later life, when his health was permanently broken. Baron Hügel, who visited Lahore in 1834, thus records his first impression of the Sikh ruler: "Ranjít Singh is now fifty-four years old. The small-pox deprived him when a child of his left eye, whence he gained the surname Kana,



MAHÁRÁJA RANJÍT SINGH.  
(*India Office.*)

one-eyed, and his face is scarred with the same malady. His beard is thin and grey, with a few dark hairs in it; according to the Sikh religious custom it reaches a little below his chin, and is untrimmed. His head is square, and large for his stature, which, though naturally short, is now considerably bowed by disease; his forehead is remarkably broad. His shoulders are wide, though his arms and hands are quite shrunk.”<sup>1</sup> The same writer concludes a later description as follows: “When he seats himself in a common English chair, with his feet drawn under him, the position is one particularly unfavourable to him; but as soon as he mounts his horse and with his black shield at his back puts him on his mettle, his whole form seems animated by the spirit within, and assumes a certain grace of which nobody could believe it susceptible.”<sup>2</sup> Mr. Prinsep, who saw a great deal of Ranjít Singh, describes him as unprepossessing in appearance, but adds that when the first ill impression disappeared, no one admitted to the presence of Ranjít Singh could fail to be struck with his extraordinary qualities, his intelligence and acuteness. “His penetrating look, the restlessness of his fiery eye, which seemed to dive into the thoughts of the person he conversed with, and the rapidity of his laconic but searching questions, denoted the activity of his mind and his insatiable curiosity.”<sup>3</sup> According to Sir Lepel Griffin, his appearance even in later life was “striking and memorable;” while, previous to his paralytic seizure in 1834, he was “the *beau idéal*

<sup>1</sup> *Travels in Kashmír and the Punjab*, by Baron Hügel, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Punjab*, vol. ii. pp. 171-2.

of a soldier—strong, spare, active, courageous, and enduring. An excellent horseman, he would remain the whole day in the saddle without showing any signs of fatigue. His love for horses amounted to a passion, and he maintained an enormous stud for his personal use collected from every part of India, Arabia, and Persia. He was also a keen sportsman and an accomplished swordsman. At Rúpar in 1831 he competed with success with his own troopers and those of Skinner's Horse in tent-pegging and feats of swordsmanship.”<sup>1</sup>

Ranjít Singh assumed few of the outward signs of royalty. His dress was invariably of the simplest description, his only ornaments, even on State occasions, being a string of pearls about his waist and the Koh-i-nur on his wrist. He never wore a royal head-dress, and he never used a throne. “My sword,” he remarked to Baron Hügel, “is all the distinction I require.” And yet no stranger could have entered his durbar and mistaken any other person for the Lion of the Punjab. But though he affected simplicity himself, his court was renowned even in India, the home of pageantry, for its splendour. He loved to surround himself with tall and handsome men, and he loved to see them sumptuously attired. At a full durbar, the brilliance of his troops and retainers and the magnificence of his courtiers recalled the glories of the court of Shah Jahán; while the contrast provided by his own lack of adornment served, as no doubt he knew, to enhance the completeness of his ascendancy.

<sup>1</sup> *Ranjít Singh*, by Sir Lepel Griffin, p. 90.

On two historic occasions, Ranjít Singh met the Governor-General of British India. The first meeting was with Lord William Bentinck in 1831, and took place at Rúpar, on the banks of the Sutlej. The two courts, encamped on either side of the river, vied with each other in the splendour of their equipment; and such was the pomp displayed in the exchange of visits of state that the occasion has come to be spoken of as the Indian "Field of the Cloth of Gold." The second meeting was in 1838, when Lord Auckland visited the Sikh ruler in his own capital, and the proceedings were no less magnificent. A full and interesting account of this pageant is to be found in the diary of the Honourable W. Osborne, Lord Auckland's military secretary. Osborne also accompanied Sir William Macnaghten on his mission to Lahore in connection with the Tripartite Treaty, to be referred to later on, and his diary gives the following graphic account of the manner in which the Mahárája received his visitors at his garden palace :—

"Dismounting from our elephants at the gateway, and entering the garden on foot, we were conducted by the two Sikh chiefs up a broad gravel walk about three hundred yards in length, lined on each side by Ranjít's Ghorcharhas, handsomely dressed in chain armour and quilted jackets, made of a rich silk of either a bright yellow, green, or scarlet colour, giving the walk from the gateway to the palace the appearance of a border of gaudy and gigantic tulips. On reaching the verandah, Ranjít's Minister, Dhián Singh, came forward and conducted us round the palace to the hall of audience, at the entrance of



which we found the Mahárája himself waiting to receive us. After a friendly embrace, he led us to the upper end of the hall, and seated us on golden chairs opposite to himself. Rajah Sher Singh was seated on his right hand, and Rajah Hira Singh, his Minister's son, upon his left, the only two individuals who are allowed a seat in his presence on public occasions, with the exception of his son and heir, Kharak Singh, though in private that privilege is sometimes accorded to the three gurus, or priests, who act as his spiritual advisers. The floor was covered with rich shawl carpets, and a gorgeous shawl canopy, embroidered with gold and precious stones, supported on golden pillars, covered three parts of the hall.

"The *coup d'œil* was most striking; every walk in the garden was lined with troops, and the whole space behind the throne was crowded with Ranjít's chiefs, mingled with natives from Kandahár, Kábul, and Afghanistán, blazing with gold and jewels, and dressed and armed in every conceivable variety of colour and fashion. Cross-legged in a golden chair, dressed in simple white, wearing no ornaments but a string of enormous pearls round the waist and the celebrated Koh-i-núr, or mountain of light, on his arm—the jewel rivalled if not surpassed in brilliancy by the glance of fire which every now and then shot from his single eye as it wandered restlessly around the circle—sat the lion of Lahore."<sup>1</sup>

No political business of any importance was trans-

<sup>1</sup> *Court and Camp of Ranjeet Singh*, by Hon. W. G. Osborne, pp. 71-2.

acted at the meetings with Lord William Bentinck and Lord Auckland. Nevertheless the proceedings, both at Rúpar and at Lahore, though confined on each occasion to the exchange of ceremonial greetings, were by no means devoid of useful results. They served not only to ratify and strengthen the friendship which already existed between Ranjít Singh and the paramount power, but they were the means of advertising that friendship to the world at large and thereby strengthening the hands of both parties. The maintenance of cordial relations with his English neighbours was the key-note of Ranjít Singh's foreign policy. "His political sagacity," says Sir Lepel Griffin, "was great, and was shown in nothing more convincingly than in his determined friendship with the English, when he had once realized that they were safe friends and very dangerous enemies." The sincerity of this friendship was proved by the best of all tests: it held when a strain was put upon it, and more than once the strain was heavy. This was strikingly illustrated during the transactions of the British Government with the country of Sind, when the Maharája, rather than break the pledge he had given more than a quarter of a century before and despite the angry protests of his sirdars, co-operated with his ally in furthering a policy with which he had no sympathy, and which necessitated the abandonment of a scheme that for years past he had been longing to carry into effect. A detailed account of the circumstances which led, in 1843, to the annexation of Sind to British India must be sought for elsewhere, but the main events of the story as they

affected the position and policy of the ruler of the Punjab must be briefly referred to.

In 1830, Lord William Bentinck received from the Board of Control instructions to investigate the value of the Indus as a commercial highway, and at the same time to cultivate friendly relations with the Amírs of Sind with a view to opening up that country to British trade, and securing the co-operation of its rulers against foreign enemies. Sind, at this time, consisted of three states, Mírpúr in the south, Hyderabad in the centre, and Khairpúr in the north, each with its own government and its own ruler, or Amír. The district which intervened between Sind proper and the Punjab had belonged to the Duráni kings of Afghanistan, but on the death of Muhammad Azím it came under the joint sway of the Sind Amírs. Its principal town, Shikárpúr, was an important commercial centre, and was situated on one of the best trade-routes into Baluchistan. On this district Ranjít Singh had long cast an envious eye; and having pushed the boundaries of his kingdom eastwards, northwards, and westwards, as far as they could be made to go, he turned to the south as the only quarter where further expansion was possible. He particularly desired to take Shikárpúr, the possession of which town would give him control of the turbulent tribes of the surrounding neighbourhood, who were constantly committing depredations on the borders of his Múltán province. War is incompatible with commerce, and the schemes of Ranjít Singh were therefore in direct conflict with those of the British Government. As to the Amírs, they were as little

disposed to surrender a valuable strip of territory as they were to allow a British official to pry into the resources of their several domains.

Now it happened that, soon after Lord William Bentinck received his communication from the Board of Control, a present from his Majesty, King William IV., to the ruler of the Punjab, consisting of four English cart-horses, arrived in Bombay. It was necessary that these ponderous animals should be forwarded without delay to Lahore, and the Governor-General decided to send them *via* Sind, and to make use of the opportunity thus afforded to carry out the Board's instructions. He accordingly entrusted the conveyance of the royal gift to Captain (afterwards Sir Alexander) Burnes, and directed that officer to ascertain in the course of his journey all that he could of Sind trade and Sind politics, and to make a report on the navigation of the River Indus. The Amírs put every obstacle they could in Burnes' way; but after many wearisome and dangerous delays, the journey was successfully accomplished, and on reaching Lahore the envoy received a hearty welcome from Ranjít Singh, who was delighted with his horses, and deemed himself highly honoured by his Majesty's regard.

Lord William Bentinck considered Burnes' report so encouraging that, early in 1831, he dispatched a mission to Hyderabad with the object of concluding a commercial treaty with the Amírs. Ranjít Singh knew little of these transactions; and, during the meeting at Rúpar the following October, he endeavoured to sound his neighbours as to their real



intentions with regard to Sind. He made no secret of his desire to seize Shikárpúr, and even hinted his readiness to join in a combined attack on the Amírs, alluding to their late opposition to Captain Burnes as a justification for such a step. But his suggestions met with little response; and before he broke up his camp he had heard enough to convince him that the British had no intention of engaging in hostilities against Sind, and would regard any such action on his part with the strongest disapproval. Though unwilling to lay aside, even for a time, his plans for territorial extension, he determined at all costs to maintain his alliance with the British intact; and before the end of the year he had not only promised to abstain from invading Sind, but had agreed to throw open the navigation of the Sutlej in continuation of that of the lower Indus. In 1832 Colonel Henry Pottinger, the leader of the Hyderabad mission, succeeded, despite the opposition with which his overtures were at first received, in negotiating a treaty which opened the roads and rivers of Sind to British trade, though forbidding their use for military purposes, and the same year a similar agreement relating to the Sutlej was made with Ranjít Singh.

But the tribes of the frontier district, encouraged by the Mír of Khairpúr, still continued their depredations; and in 1835 the Governor of Múltán was forced to take active measures for their chastisement, with the result that the tribesmen were defeated, and the Sikhs occupied Rojhan, a position some miles south of Mithankote. The Amírs at once made preparations to repel an invasion; while two



Sikh armies, one under Prince Kharak Singh and the other under Nao Nihál Singh, were soon on the banks of the Indus. As a collision seemed imminent, the British Government determined to mediate. The Mír of Khairpúr was informed that the British looked to him to restrain his unruly subjects, and, at the same time, a special ambassador was sent to Lahore to remonstrate with Ranjít Singh and warn him that if he persisted in making war on Sind, the Government would be obliged to consider his action unfriendly. By yielding to persuasion, and thus paving the way to a peaceful settlement, the Sikh ruler once more showed the value he placed on British friendship. He pledged himself to abandon once for all his designs on Shikárpúr, and stipulated only for the retention of Rojhan as a Sikh possession. To this the Amírs reluctantly consented. The Mazáris, the tribe who had caused most of the trouble, were thus brought under the dominion of Lahore, and the Mazári chief soon after tendered his submission. "Runjeet Singh," says Cunningham, "was urged by his chiefs not to yield to the demands of the English, for to their understanding it was not clear where such demands would stop; but he shook his head, and asked them what had become of the two hundred thousand spears of the Mahrattas!—and, as if to show how completely he professed to forget or forgive the check imposed upon him, he invited the Governor-General to be present at Lahore on the occasion of the marriage of the grandson whom he had hoped to hail as the conqueror of Sind."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Sikhs*, by J. D. Cunningham, p. 219.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LAST YEARS OF RANJÍT SINGH.

THE extent to which, as early as 1835, the fear of Russia dominated British policy in India, may be gathered from Lord William Bentinck's *minute* of that year on the constitution of the Indian army. In that document, fitness to cope with a Russian invasion is laid down as the main test of military efficiency. The possibility of trouble arising in the Punjab is indeed mentioned; but that a storm was gathering in that country which was to shake the very foundations of the British Raj, there existed in the mind of the Governor-General not the faintest presentiment. "Of internal dangers," he wrote, "nobody entertains less alarm than myself." But if Chilianwála and Gujrát cast no shadows before, a plentiful supply was provided by a danger which never came at all. The Russians, it was said, already had designs on Herát. In imagination, Lord William Bentinck saw them in actual possession of the city; and step by step the *minute* traces out their subsequent progress, from Herát to Kandahár, from Kandahár to Ghazni, from Ghazni to Kábul, and from Kábul to Attock, whilst warlike tribes, eager

for the plunder of India, join them at every stage. "But however this may be,"—so runs the *minute*—"it will be sufficient to assume the possibility that a Russian force of 20,000 men well equipped, accompanied with a body of 100,000 horse, may reach the shores of the Indus; that Ranjít Singh has no means to resist their advance; and that the invaders, having crossed the Indus into the Punjab, would find themselves in possession of the parts of India, the most fertile of resources in every kind, and secure on every side from being harassed and attacked even if they had not on their side a body of irregular cavalry much more numerous and efficient than any we have to oppose them." It is easy for later generations to laugh at such forebodings; but at the time they appeared, and, indeed, were, reasonable enough. If Russia was not actually contemplating a march on Herát, Persia undoubtedly was; and what was Persia but the bayonet at the end of the Russian rifle? Russia was, in fact, steadily advancing into central Asia, pushing Persia along in front of her. Dost Muhammad was believed to be in correspondence with both Teheran and St. Petersburg, and a triple alliance between the European and the two Asiatic powers was well within the bounds of possibility. This was not a state of affairs which Indian statesmen could afford to treat with indifference, and the question how best to deal with it was no easy one to answer. There were two alternatives: either to avoid all political connection with countries west of the Indus, and to trust to the kingdom of Lahore as a sufficient barrier

against possible invasion, or to win over Afghanistan to a British alliance, and thus to convert that country into a buffer state. An obvious objection to the first course was the ephemeral nature of the Lahore barrier. Ranjít Singh was broken down in health. He had already had more than one paralytic stroke, and his death, which might be expected at any moment, would in all human probability result in the collapse of the Sikh power. On this account, and believing as he did that the Indian garrison was utterly inadequate for the protection of the country against external attack, Lord William Bentinck wisely advocated the "buffer-state" policy. Had his successor, Lord Auckland, displayed equal wisdom in carrying that policy into effect, the dismal tragedy of the winter of 1841-42, perhaps even the Sikh wars, would never have taken place. There is no country where a reverse costs more than in India. But for the rout of Monson's brigade in 1804, there would have been no third Mahratta war; but for the disastrous retreat from Kábul, it is more than likely that the Sikhs would never have had the temerity to cross the Sutlej.

In 1837 Burnes was sent on what was described as a commercial mission to Afghanistan, the real object of which was—as Dost Muhammad knew quite as well as Burnes—to counteract Russian influence at Kábul, and to convince the Amír that his surest defence against Persian arms and Muscovite diplomacy lay in united action and friendship with the Indian Government. Burnes received a hearty welcome from Dost Muhammad, who professed himself ready and

eager to join in an alliance with the British if they, in return for his friendship, would aid him in regaining possession of the province of Pesháwar. To promise compliance with this request was obviously impossible. Ranjít Singh may have found Pesháwar a costly and troublesome possession to hold, but the last person in the world to whom he was prepared to surrender it was Dost Muhammad Khán. Moreover, the Sikh ruler was still smarting from the check that had been imposed on him in Sind; and to have forced him at such a time, and with less excuse than before, to make another and much greater sacrifice, would have been as unwarrantable as it would have been inexpedient.

In 1837 the Persians laid siege to Herát, and Lord Auckland became more anxious than ever to establish British influence at Kábul. An alliance with Dost Muhammad at the expense of the friendship of Ranjít Singh was not to be thought of; and the Governor-General decided, in the event of Burnes's mission proving unsuccessful, to champion the cause of Shah Shuja, who was still a refugee at Ludhiána, and ready to jump at any chance which presented itself of regaining his inheritance. Burnes worked day and night to induce the Amír to give way in the matter of Pesháwar, or to modify his demand in such a manner as to render a compromise possible, for he had seen enough in Kábul to convince him that he was dealing with a strong and capable ruler, whose alliance would be of far greater value than that of Shah Shuja, who, however amenable he might be to British influence, would be utterly inca-



pable of controlling his Afghan subjects. Unfortunately, Lord Auckland had his own views on the situation. He had come to the conclusion that Dost Muhammad was not to be trusted; and he had formed an exaggerated and altogether erroneous idea of Shah Shuja's influence in Afghanistan, based entirely on the representations of the exile himself. The result was that Burnes's later efforts received very cold support from Calcutta. Whether a more conciliatory attitude at this juncture on the part of the Indian Government would have induced Dost Muhammad to change his tactics is a question on which it is unnecessary for us to speculate. That the Afghan ruler was genuinely anxious for the British alliance is proved by the fact that he declared himself ready to hold Pesháwar as a fief of the Punjab, or even to share its possession with his traitorous brother, Sultán Muhammad Khán. But ownership of the province, in some form or another, he refused to forego, and from this determination Burnes could not move him. Ranjít Singh's attitude was equally uncompromising. Whatever else happened to Pesháwar, it should not become the property of his worst enemy. Sultán Muhammad Khán might have it at a price; but Dost Muhammad,—never!

In March 1838 the Amír, despairing of getting any satisfaction out of Lord Auckland, opened negotiations with Persia and the Tzar; Burnes was recalled from Kábul in May; and before the end of July a treaty had been concluded between the Government of India, Ranjít Singh, and Shah Shuja, for the purpose of restoring the last named to the

kingdom from which he had already been twice expelled. It is less easy to see what Lord Auckland ought to have done, than it is to see that what he did was the worst thing possible. On paper, the advantages to be gained by the treaty were tremendous. British India was to be provided with an effectual and permanent barrier against Russo-Persian intrigue; Ranjít Singh was to be confirmed as the rightful possessor of Pesháwar and everything else he had been able to snatch from the rulers of Afghanistan; and the Duráni exile was to be restored once more to the arms of his loyal and loving subjects. Had Shah Shuja been everything that Lord Auckland took him to be, all these good things might have come to pass. But it was Shah Shuja who was the weak link in the chain. His influence in Afghanistan, on which the success of the enterprise depended, was a myth. He himself was vain, weak-minded, and incapable; a man unfitted in every particular to establish a strong government in a country like Afghanistan. But this vital flaw in the scheme was only discovered when it had become too late to draw back.

The tripartite treaty thus entered into was practically a renewal of that made between Ranjít Singh and Shah Shuja in 1833, the only important difference being the participation in it of the British Government. Ranjít Singh's acquiescence was not obtained without difficulty. At the end of May, Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Macnaghten, Chief Secretary to Lord Auckland's Government, was sent on a special mission to Lahore to explain to him the general plan

of the undertaking, and to secure his co-operation. The meeting (already referred to in the preceding chapter) took place at Adínanagar, a few miles from the capital, where the Mahárája was endeavouring to recruit his shattered health. The mission was received with every mark of respect and cordiality, but more than six weeks passed away before Macnaghten brought his negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion. The truth was that Ranjít Singh disapproved of the whole enterprise. He was by no means anxious for the restoration of Shah Shuja, whom he distrusted quite as much as the Governor-General distrusted Dost Muhammad ; and, strong as was his friendship for the English, he had no desire to see himself hemmed in on every side by British authority. He had a rooted aversion to undertaking a campaign in Afghanistan, and he did not consider that confirmation in the possession of his Afghan conquests, which he felt that he was in no danger of losing, was a sufficient reward for his services. But notwithstanding these objections, he realized that if Shah Shuja was to be reinstated, it would be to his advantage to have a hand in the transaction. When, therefore, towards the end of the conference, Mr. Macnaghten informed him that the programme would be carried through whether he came in or not, he took the only course open to him and promised his support. Like a true statesman, having once decided to give way, he did so with a good grace, and set himself to further, to the best of his ability, the plans of the alliance.

On June 26, Ranjít Singh placed his signa-

ture to the tripartite treaty, and the next day Mr. Macnaghten set out for Ludhiána to obtain that of Shah Shuja. This proved a much easier task; though at the last moment even Shuja's buoyant optimism showed signs of shrinkage, and he began to wonder whether his position as the puppet of the British would be altogether enviable, or likely to enhance his dignity in the eyes of his subjects. On July 19, Macnaghten reached Simla, and before the end of the month the treaty had been ratified by the Governor-General.

It is unnecessary for us to follow in detail the course of the first Afghan war. For our present purpose, a bare outline of the events connected with the restoration and the downfall of Shah Shuja will suffice. In December 1838, a British force set out to escort the happy exile through Sind into southern Afghanistan, while Timúr, Shah Shuja's son, accompanied by a powerful Sikh contingent, left Firozpúr for Kábul, by way of Pesháwar and the Khaibar Pass. Kandahár was taken the following April, and Ghazni three months later. On the fall of the latter stronghold, Dost Muhammad, with 2,000 horsemen and his son Akbar Khán, fled across the Hindu Kush, and in August, Shah Shuja-ul-mulk, "glittering with jewels, and mounted on a white charger, was escorted in triumph by British officers and troops through the streets of Kábul into the castled palace of the Bálá Hissár." Macnaghten was knighted, the commander of the British troops, Sir John Keane, received a peerage, and the Governor-General was created Earl of Auckland.



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It soon became apparent that the restoration of the Duráni Shah was unpopular throughout Afghanistan, and that the withdrawal of British protection would be the signal for his dethronement. For two years a British army of occupation managed, with difficulty, to keep the forces of rebellion in check. In 1840 the capture of Dost Muhammad led to a brief period of tranquillity, but in November 1841 a general rising took place. Burnes and Macnaghten were murdered, and Kábul fell into the hands of the rebels. In the depth of winter the English army set out to find its way through the passes back to India. There is no need to dwell on the tragedy which followed. Of the 4,000 troops and 12,000 camp-followers who left Kábul, one solitary survivor struggled into Jalálábád, where General Sale, with his "illustrious garrison," was still holding out.

Before the fall of Ghazni, the Lion of the Punjab had breathed his last at Lahore. To those who had seen him at Firozpur, and during Lord Auckland's subsequent visits to Lahore and Amritsar, it had been obvious that his life was drawing to a close. Whilst the festivities lasted, his activity was unabated; but this "was the last effort of his energetic spirit. He had scarcely returned to the Punjab—Lord Auckland being then in the act of paying his return visit—when he was seized with one of those violent attacks which had often before caused his death to be reported. He, however, again recovered, but completely lost the power of speech; and a curious and interesting sight it was now to behold the fast dying monarch, his mind still alive; still by signs giving



his orders; still receiving reports; and, assisted by the faithful Fakeer Azeezoodin, almost as usual attending to affairs of state. By a slight turn of his hand to the south, he would inquire the news from the British secretary; by a similar turn to the west, he would demand tidings from the invading army; and most anxious was he for intelligence from the Afghan quarter; doubting the success of the English measure, seeing his own advantage in their failure, yet unwilling or afraid to withdraw from his engagements. True justice has never been done to the old chief for his conduct at this time; when against what he believed his own interests, he sent his whole army to Peshawar under his grandson, Nou Nehal, to act in concert with Captain Wade, leaving his Sutlej frontier, then occupied by a British division, quite unprotected. He not only did this, but the whole resources of his country in cattle, grain, etc., were thrown open to the British Government.”<sup>1</sup> For some days before the end came his lower limbs were completely paralysed, but his courage even then did not desert him. On July 29 he died “as like the old Lion as he had lived.” The last rites were performed the following evening in the presence of a dense crowd of spectators. Four of the royal wives, who refused to survive their lord, were burnt with him, and the Minister, Dhián Singh, was only restrained by force from throwing himself on the funeral pyre. The Maharája’s ashes were conveyed to Benares, and scattered in the waters of the holy Ganges.

<sup>1</sup> *Calcutta Review* for August 1844, p. 475.

Until his death, Ranjít Singh never lost sight of the fact that the welfare, nay, the very existence, of his kingdom depended on the maintenance of friendly relations with the British. The Sikhs supported him in this, as they would have supported him in any other policy, not because they approved of it, but because it was his. During the latter part of his reign they had shown, more than once, that they did not approve of it; but they had invariably bent before the iron will of their master. It was not that the Sikhs had any special animosity against the British as such; they disliked the British alliance because they distrusted British policy, the ultimate object of which they conceived to be the destruction of the strength of the Khálsa as a military power. Ranjít Singh was statesman enough to see that, so long as the British alliance existed, it was to the advantage of the Government of India to promote the welfare of the Sikh kingdom. Of the two incapable rulers who followed, there is at least this much to be said, that, in their dealings with the paramount power, they endeavoured to follow in the steps of their illustrious predecessor; but whereas the latter was strong enough to dictate his own policy to the Khálsa, the former were but tools in the hands of their more skilful and utterly unscrupulous ministers and favourites, and the chief reason why they supported the alliance was that they feared their own army even more than they feared the British.

Some time, however, elapsed before the army took matters into its own hands by openly declaring war against the British; but every day the spirit of

turbulent independence became more widely diffused in its ranks, and the soldiers began to look more and more to their officers, and less and less to the government of the state, for the direction of the affairs of the Khálsa. It was not until the evacuation of Kábul and the annihilation of the British garrison had destroyed their belief in the invincibility of British troops, that their attitude became actually threatening. During the remainder of the Afghan war, portions of the Sikh contingent, mainly through the influence of Major Henry Lawrence, the officer in charge of operations at Pesháwar, continued to render valuable service; but the demeanour of other portions was distinctly mutinous. One regiment refused point-blank to take any further part in the campaign, and, in defiance of its officers, marched back to Lahore. This, and other incidents of a similar nature, indicated plainly enough the temper of the Sikh army; and before the end of 1842, a war with the Punjab was looked upon as a certainty.

But Ranjít Singh created more than one force which none but himself could control. The Lahore durbar, once his strong hand was withdrawn, became as unmanageable as the army. The powerful chiefs and sirdars of whom it was composed were, as has already been shown, united neither by race nor creed. The allegiance they had yielded to Ranjít Singh they were willing to yield to no other. Each was bent on his own aggrandizement and the downfall of his rivals; and each was prepared, in the absence of a strong central authority, to secure his ends by

violence or by fraud, or if necessary by both combined. In this unruly company, the Jammu brothers (referred to on page 110) were by far the most striking figures. Dhián Singh, Ghuláb Singh, and Suchet Singh were the handsomest men at the court of Ranjít Singh, and the two former were equally conspicuous for their intelligence and administrative ability. Dhián Singh, who had raised himself from door-keeper to prime minister, was now the virtual ruler of the state, and he had an able supporter in his son Híra Singh. Ghuláb, who, in return for his military services, had been granted the estate of Jammu, had increased his possessions to such an extent that he was become the greatest sirdar in the Punjab. Both were skilled in the art of oriental diplomacy, and their manners were, when occasion demanded it, as engaging as their looks. Suchet Singh was handsomer than his brothers, but much inferior to them in attainments, while all three were equally distinguished for their cruelty, their duplicity, and their insatiable ambition. It was the aim of the Jammu brothers to bring the whole of the Punjab under their joint dominion, Dhián looking forward to the control of the south, and Ghuláb to that of the north. Dhián speedily fell a victim to his own intrigues; but Ghuláb was luckier, and lived to attain, through the generosity of the British, the object of his ambition. Of the latter, the writer in the *Calcutta Review* quoted above gives us the following picture: "Golab Singh is rather corpulent. His features are good, and the expression of his countenance is mild. No man better dilates on

mercy and charity; but woe to the wretch who excites his anger. He dresses simply, but is always well attended, and is much more careful of himself than was Dhian Singh. He constantly wears a double-barrelled pistol in his belt, and keenly eyes the stranger admitted to his presence. Such is Golab Singh, who, if he lives ten years more, will be monarch of an extensive hill territory, including, in all probability, Kashmir.”<sup>1</sup>

The main opposition to the Jammu brothers came from the Sindhanwálias, a powerful Sukárchakia family closely allied to that of Ranjít Singh. The most prominent representatives of the family at this time were the brothers Attar Singh and Lehna Singh, and the nephew of the former, Ajít Singh.<sup>2</sup> All of them played a deep part in the intrigues which followed the accession of Prince Kharak, and all met with violent deaths, but not before they had brought about the downfall and death of their arch enemy Dhián Singh.

<sup>1</sup> *Calcutta Review* for August 1844, page 505.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix F.



## CHAPTER IX.

### DECLINE OF THE SIKH MONARCHY.

ON the 28th July, Prince Kharak was installed as ruler of the Punjab, his minister, Dhián Singh, having taken every precaution to secure his peaceful succession. For a time all went well; and Dhián Singh found, as he had anticipated, that the new king was a puppet in his hands. But this did not last long. Another aspirant to power appeared in the person of Cheyt Singh, a man of low birth and high ambitions, who contrived to win the favour of Kharak Singh, and whose influence over the half-witted monarch began rapidly to eclipse that of the prime minister. Feeling his position growing daily more insecure, Dhián Singh prevailed upon Prince Nao Nihál, Kharak's son, to join him in a plot for the destruction of the obnoxious favourite and the deposition of the Maharája. Nao Nihál had no love for the Jammu brothers; but, dreading the results of Cheyt Singh's intrigues, he lent himself to the scheme; and, in the month of October, a party of soldiers, headed by the prince and the minister, entered by night into the royal palace, murdered Cheyt Singh, and made the Maharája a prisoner.

Nao Nihál Singh at once placed himself at the head of the government, though Kharak Singh, who was kept in confinement, continued to be the titular ruler, and occasionally, when a king was required, was brought forth and placed for a few royal moments on his confiscated throne. Kharak Singh's deposition aroused but little indignation. He was ill-looking and almost an imbecile, and was respected by none. Nao Nihál, on the other hand, was popular with nearly all classes, and particularly with the army, for he was a tall and handsome prince, and was endowed with many of his grandfather's manly qualities. He was, in addition, a capable administrator; and during his regency he managed the affairs of the state with vigour and skill. Dhián Singh continued to hold office as minister; but he by no means appreciated the masterful methods of his new chief, under whom he found himself more of a nonentity than ever. He soon saw that the only way to regain his lost authority was to get rid of Nao Nihál; and again fortune—or the devil—came to his assistance.

On November 5, 1840, the unhappy Kharak Singh died. Nao Nihál's accession followed as a matter of course; but if the soldiers of the Khálsa looked forward to a new era of military glory under their spirited young chief, their hopes were doomed to disappointment, for the day on which Nao Nihál became the ruler of the Punjab was the last of his life. In the morning he attended the obsequies of his father; in the evening, as the royal procession was re-entering Lahore, the city gateway collapsed,

and he was crushed to death beneath the débris. According to some, but a single beam fell, killing the Maharája and the son of Ghuláb Singh, who was riding on the same elephant. Others assert that it was the brick parapet of the gateway which collapsed, and others that the crowding of the elephants overstrained and brought down the whole structure. Whatever the truth may be, the minister was rid of Nao Nihál Singh, and the Sikh people were bereft of a gallant and promising ruler. —

The most important features of Nao Nihál's regency were the military operations carried out by General Ventura and by Rája Ghuláb Singh. The former led an expedition into the mountainous country to the north of the Simla hills, where he overcame the Rája of Mandi, annexing his state, together with the domains of other hill chieftains, including the district of Suket. The latter, who had for some years been extending the boundaries of Kashmír, completed the subjugation of Ladák with its capital Leh, and the district of Baltistán, or Little Tibet.

Dhián Singh, as soon as he knew that the Maharája was really dead, sent intelligence of the disaster to Sher Singh, the nearest approach to a son of Ranjít Singh that remained, urging him to hurry to Lahore and establish his claim to the vacant throne. Sher Singh, who was then at Batála, lost no time in following the minister's advice. He reached the capital on the 7th of November, and the same day was proclaimed ruler of the Punjab. Unfortunately, however, Sikh custom demanded that during the days of mourning, twelve in number, he should take

no part in public affairs; and before the expiry of the prescribed period, a second candidate for the throne appeared. This was Ráni Chand Kour, the widow of Kharak Singh. According to the law of inheritance followed by the Mánjha Sikhs, a widow, in the absence of male heirs, succeeded to her husband's estates; and under this law the Ráni claimed the throne in her own right. She was supported by the Sindhanwália brothers and also by Ghuláb Singh and his nephew Híra Singh, a combination so powerful that Sher Singh was forced to withdraw to Batála; and, on the 30th of November, Chand Kour was proclaimed the Ráni of Lahore. Dhián retained his post as minister, though he still continued to espouse the cause of Sher Singh.

This apparent split in the Jammu camp has puzzled the chroniclers. A simple explanation, however, suggests itself. The issue of the contest for the throne was doubtful. If both the brothers supported the same party and lost, their cause would be done for. But if Dhián took one side and Ghuláb the other, either Dhián or Ghuláb was safe to win; and the winner would have little difficulty in securing the loser's restoration to favour. This may not be the correct explanation; but, at any rate, it is consistent with the characters of the brothers, and is in accord with the subsequent course of events. Dhián was the winner, and Ghuláb and Híra Singh shared the winnings.

Had Chand Kour been a woman of strong character and ability, she might have succeeded in reconciling the Sikhs to female control. But she was

dissolute and incapable, and used her power as a means of ministering to her depraved desires. Her shameless profligacy and the vices and intrigues of her court disgusted even her own adherents, whose numbers diminished day by day. Sher Singh, meanwhile, was gradually strengthening his position. The major portion of the army declared for him; and when, in January, he was joined by General Ventura, then on his way back from Mandi, with 6,000 troops, he determined to strike a decisive blow, and marched for the capital. The Ráni defended her throne with much greater energy than she had displayed in ruling her subjects. Aided by the Sindhanwália brothers and Ghuláb Singh, she held out in the capital, with such troops as remained faithful to her, for eight days, during which time the besiegers lost nearly two thousand men. She capitulated on the 17th January, Sher Singh having undertaken to spare her garrison, a promise he had some difficulty in fulfilling. Ghuláb Singh withdrew his troops to the north of the Rávi, and Attar Singh and Ajít Singh fled across the Sutlej, where they made a vain attempt to persuade Lord Auckland to take up the Ráni's cause. On the 27th January, Sher Singh was again installed as Mahárája. He treated Chand Kour with consideration, assigning her apartments in the palace, where she was kept in easy confinement. But his soldiers, maddened by the loss of so many of their comrades, and balked of what they considered their legitimate prey, wreaked a heavy vengeance on the unfortunate citizens, plundering bazars and dwelling-houses with merciless indiscrimination.



When tranquillity had been in some measure restored, Dhián Singh, who in return for his faithful conduct was appointed to his old office, procured the pardon of his brother and son. Ghuláb Singh and Híra Singh were recalled to court; and soon afterwards the latter was made commander-in-chief of the forces of the Punjab. Sher Singh, a well-intentioned profligate, was only too glad to shift the cares of government on to the shoulders of the willing Dhián, who took the opportunity to fill all the most important posts in the state service with "friends of the family." The Jammu brothers were never more powerful than at this juncture. They had played a deep and daring game, and their triumph, if short-lived, was complete.

But the kingdom of the Punjab was drifting nearer and nearer to anarchy. Over the Sikh nation it was impossible that a Rájput minister could have any real hold. In the devastated capital, Dhián Singh was able to restore some measure of order; but without its walls his authority was treated with contempt. The army was getting more and more out of hand. In Lahore itself insubordination was rife enough, but in the provinces things were much worse. At Pesháwar and Múltán, in Kashmír, and in the newly-conquered state of Mandi, the troops rose in open rebellion; and though these and similar outbreaks were temporarily quelled, the drastic measures taken by the governors concerned strengthened rather than allayed the mutinous spirit. In some cases whole regiments were disbanded; but this served only to increase the general disorder, for the

discharged soldiers, scattering over the surrounding districts, threw in their lot with the many robber bands who, in the absence of any settled government, roamed unchecked over the country side, blackmailing the terrified cultivators, driving off their cattle, and pillaging their farmsteads and villages.

When news reached the Punjab of the evacuation of Kábul and the destruction of the British garrison, the control of the Sikh army became a more difficult matter than ever. During the remainder of the Afghan war Sher Singh did his best to fulfil the terms of the alliance entered into by Ranjít Singh; but his action was thoroughly unpopular both with the Sikh sirdars and the troops of the Khálsa, and it required all his influence to prevent the latter from opposing the British army on its return march through the Punjab. Sale's defence of Jalálábád, and the victories of Nott and Pollock, produced a wholesome effect on the Sikh soldiers, and checked for a time their fiery impetuosity. But they clung to their belief that the ultimate aim of the Indian Government was the curtailment, if not the destruction, of the Sikh kingdom; and splendidly as the Kábul disaster had been retrieved, the fact remained that a British force had suffered defeat at the hands of a foe over whom the troops of the Khálsa had gained more than one decisive victory. Sher Singh paid dearly for his constancy. It was his attitude at this time, combined with his supposed intention of seeking British support or protection, that cost him the allegiance of his army, and thereby hastened his own destruction.

In June 1842, Ráni Chand Kour was murdered

by her own attendants. There is no direct evidence to show that Sher Singh was responsible for the crime, so he is entitled to the benefit of the doubt. But that the Rání's disappearance from the scene was a relief to him we can well believe; for, as long as she lived, the Sindhanwália brothers continued to scheme for her restoration, by means of which they looked to rebuild their own fortunes, if not to secure possession of the throne itself, which, in the absence of any direct male descendant of Ranjít Singh, would pass by law of inheritance to the Sindhanwália family. The Rání's death completely wrecked their plans; and soon afterwards, through the mediation of the British Government, they obtained the Mahárája's pardon, and were once more received at the court of Lahore. Sher Singh was the more willing to take this obviously dangerous step because he saw in the Sindhanwália brothers a useful counterpoise to the overpowering influence of Dhián Singh, while their presence in the capital would enable him to keep a more watchful eye on their movements.

Sher Singh had never trusted the Jammu brothers, and his suspicions were not lessened by the intelligence that the Rání Jindan, one of the wives of Ranjít Singh, with her infant son Dhulíp, had found an asylum with Ghuláb Singh at Jammu. Probably no one believed that Dhulíp was the son of Ranjít Singh; but, on the other hand, no one could prove that he was not; and that alone was sufficient to render him a dangerous weapon in the hands of such a master of intrigue as Ghuláb Singh. Dhián was not slow to perceive that his power was on the wane.

Cold looks greeted his appearance in the durbar or at court, while one by one his adherents were deprived of their offices. The influence of the Sindhanwálias increased as his own declined, and Dhián Singh once more felt it to be his duty to organize a revolution. This time, however, he laid his plans with less skill, or perhaps his past successes had made him over confident.

It would not have suited Dhián's future plans to be known as the assassin of the Sikh ruler. He, therefore, determined to get the deed done by others, and the instruments he selected were the Sindhanwália brothers. He told Ajít Singh that the Mahárája's object in recalling him and his brother to court was to bring about their destruction, and he put forward the conspiracy as the only means of averting their doom. This story Ajít, who was equally anxious for the Mahárája's death, professed to believe; and it is surprising that the readiness with which he fell in with the minister's proposals did not arouse the latter's suspicions, or at any rate induce him to walk more warily.

Sher Singh knew that there was a plot against his life. A soothsayer had foretold the very day on which the attempt would be made—the *ides* of September. On the morning in question, he went forth to inspect a body of troops, and, remembering the soothsayer's warning, he refused to allow his son, Partáb Singh, to accompany him, bidding him go and watch the casting of a new piece of ordnance at the gun-factory. The inspection was barely concluded when Ajít Singh rode on to the parade-ground. He was carrying a new and handsome fowling-piece,

which he begged permission to exhibit to the Mahá-rája. Sher Singh at once held out his hand for the weapon, and as he did so Ajít pointed it at his breast and shot him dead. The unfortunate Partáb, a high-spirited and handsome lad of fourteen, shared his father's fate. As he returned from the foundry, he was met by Lehna Singh, who, with one stroke of his sword, severed the lad's head from his body. But their bloody work was not yet finished. Hastening to the city, the murderers invited Dhián Singh to a private conference to decide on the measures next to be taken. Not without misgivings, the minister made his way to the meeting-place. As he approached, the Sindhanwálias contrived to separate him from his escort, and the moment he was in their midst they fell upon him and did him to death. "A Muhammadan, one of the few attendants with the minister, was the only one who made any resistance, and he was immediately cut down, and his body, with that of his master, was thrown into the rubbish-pit of the gun-foundry in the fort." Such was the end of Rája Dhián Singh, a man endowed with almost every quality that makes for greatness—courage, energy, temperance almost amounting to austerity, determination, discernment, tact, and patience; but his virtues, as well as his pre-eminent abilities, were dedicated to the service of his all-consuming passion for power and self-aggrandizement. In addition to his virtues and talents, he had at his disposal every vice which goes to make up ambition's outfit, and expediency alone determined the class of instrument to be employed.





1. Mahārāja Kharak Singh. 2. Prince Nao Nihāl Singh. 3. Mahārāja Sher Singh. 4. Mahārāja Dhulip Singh. (*India Office.*)

Had the Sindhanwálias been able to include Híra Singh in their list of victims, their cause might have triumphed; for the soldiers of the Khálsa, without the support of which success was impossible, were not inclined to mourn the loss of Sher Singh, still less that of his Rájput minister, and would have preferred to sell their services to Ajít Singh rather than to the representative of the Jammu faction. But at this critical juncture Híra Singh displayed all his father's cunning and energy. The moment the news of the murders reached him, he assembled his troops, and in a passionate address called upon them to avenge the deaths of their king and his own father. The Sindhanwálias, he told them, were intriguing with the British for the dismemberment of the Khálsa, and soon they themselves would be forced to give up their arms and "to seek an ignoble maintenance from the plough." These well-chosen words, coupled with large promises of increased pay, completely won over his hearers. They responded in a body to his call, and announced their readiness to follow wherever he chose to lead them.

Three days after the murders were committed, the Sindhanwálias were besieged in the old fort in which, on the news of Híra Singh's approach, they had shut themselves up with about a thousand followers. On the 20th of September the fort was breached, and the besiegers, who had been promised the plunder of the citadel as the reward of success, rushed madly in to seize their prey. The garrison made a stout resistance, but the odds against them were overwhelming, and they were practically annihilated, Ajít Singh and

Lehna Singh being amongst the slain. Of the Sindhanwália brothers, Attar Singh alone remained alive. He was on his way to Lahore when the siege took place, and on learning its disastrous results, he made his way across the borders into British territory. On the day following the siege, Dhulíp Singh was proclaimed Mahárāja, with Híra Singh as minister. The estates of the Sindhanwálias were confiscated, and their dwellings destroyed. The troops received the promised increment to their pay, and in addition each soldier received a gratuity of a month's pay as a recompense for his services.

The army of the Khálsa was now, to all intents and purposes, a self-governing body. Its affairs were conducted by *panchayats*, or councils of "five," representing each company, and elected by the soldiers themselves. To these *panchayats* the men looked for the redress of all their grievances, and to them they made their demands for increased pay, or the dismissal of obnoxious officers. The system originated in the reign of Sher Singh, and so rapidly did the power of the councils grow that they soon acquired the complete control, not only of the army, but of almost every branch of the administration. The head of each council, with whom the chief power rested, was known as the *Panch*; the others were styled *Kar Panches*, and were looked on as the "assistants or tools of their principals, and their business was chiefly to go among the soldiery and to stir them up to anything that their chiefs might desire." On important occasions the councils met in a general assembly, whose decrees were regarded as the voice

of the Khálsa. But their resolutions "were often unstable or unwise, and the representatives of different divisions might take opposite sides from sober conviction or self-willed prejudice, or they might be bribed and cajoled by such able and unscrupulous men as Raja Golab Singh."<sup>1</sup>

In those days power was a dangerous possession. Every state official knew that to incur the displeasure of the army was equivalent to signing his own death warrant. Híra Singh was more fortunate than many of his contemporaries. By dint of a continuous series of bribes and concessions he contrived to hold on to his office and his life for fifteen months, during which time he was responsible for the death of twelve leading chiefs and sirdars. Híra Singh possessed both courage and ability; but he allowed himself to be governed in all his acts by a Brahmin *pandit* named Jalla, the family priest of the Jammu brothers; and it was to the *pandit's* arrogance and contempt for the Sikh sirdars, rather than to his own faults, that Híra Singh owed his destruction.

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Sikhs*, by J. D. Cunningham, p. 254.



## CHAPTER X.

### ANARCHY.

THE youthful minister found himself beset by dangers. He was threatened by no less than three powerful rivals—Jowáhir Singh, the brother of the Ráni Jindan, who considered himself the natural guardian of his nephew Dhulíp; Attar Singh, the last of the Sindhanwálias, who was burning to avenge the deaths of his brothers; and his own uncle Suchet, who, prompted more by jealousy than anything else, was determined to supplant his precocious nephew.

In November 1843 Jowáhir Singh and Suchet Singh made a combined attempt to turn the army from its allegiance to Híra Singh, Jowáhir threatening to remove his nephew into British territory unless the Jammu minister was deposed. Their proposals were debated at a meeting of the *panchayats*; but Jowáhir's injudicious threat of seeking British assistance offended the Panches, who sent a report of the whole matter to Híra Singh. Jowáhir was thrown into prison, and Suchet only escaped a similar punishment through the mediation of Ghuláb Singh. He was, however, compelled to quit Lahore with all his followers. Previous to their departure, the latter were made to surrender



their arms, and the discomfited uncle, incapable of further mischief, and uttering vows of vengeance, retired with his brother to Jammu.

At the beginning of 1844, two brothers, Kashmíra Singh and Peshora Singh, reputed sons of Ranjít Singh, were induced by Suchet to raise the standard of revolt at Siálkot, proclaiming themselves the rivals of Dhulíp Singh. Several of the more discontented Sikh regiments joined them, and for nearly two months they succeeded in holding out against Ghuláb Singh, who, with his own troops and a large detachment from Lahore, was sent to invest their stronghold. At the end of March they agreed to capitulate, on condition that they should be allowed to depart with all their troops and personal possessions. Ghuláb Singh would have preferred to see them in captivity at Jammu, where their presence would have been of considerable value to him. But an urgent message from Lahore obliged him to accept their terms; and the pretenders were permitted to evacuate Siálkot, and to march unmolested into the Mánjha district, where they found refuge with a religious devotee named Bábá Bír Singh, a man of large influence in his own neighbourhood and highly esteemed throughout the Sikh community.

These operations against the reputed sons of the great Mahárája had been regarded by the Khálsa with strong displeasure, and it was only by promising the Panches that no violence should be offered to the persons of the princes that Híra Singh had been able to prevent a serious insurrection. The instructions sent to Ghuláb Singh at Siálkot appeased the anger

of the troops, and tranquillity was soon restored ; but an exaggerated account of the misunderstanding reached Jammu, and Suchet Singh rashly decided to use the occasion for a second attempt to displace his nephew. With a small band of followers he set out with all speed towards Lahore. On the 26th of March, having approached to within a few miles of the city, he halted and occupied a small mosque on the banks of the Rávi, from whence he sent his agents to inform the troops of his arrival, and to win them to his support. But Híra Singh had been lavish in his gifts and promises, and the Panches were, for the time being, in a contented mood. Moreover, they saw little to be gained by deposing one Jammu chief and setting up another in his place ; so they gave the emissaries of Suchet to understand that the best thing their master could do was to depart as speedily as possible to Jammu. But Suchet scorned the thought of flying from his own nephew. Despite the earnest appeals of his followers, he refused to abandon his enterprise, and the next day he found himself attacked by a force large enough to repel an invasion. Suchet Singh had most of his brothers' faults and few of their virtues ; but his end was glorious. We may truthfully say of him that nothing in his life so well became him as his manner of leaving it. Sword in hand, he and his trusty few "rushed upon the thickest mass of their destroyers, and so furious was their onset that they actually broke through or drove back four entire battalions, killing upwards of thirty of the foremost ranks. But this desperate valour availed not the

devoted band so fearfully overmatched: in a short time forty-two of the men were lying dead on the field, and four fell badly wounded, of whom only one survived. Rajah Suchet Singh, it is hardly needful to say, was among the slain.”<sup>1</sup>

In the month of May, Attar Singh made an equally unsuccessful bid for power. Since the murder of Sher Singh he had remained in hiding on the far side of the Sutlej; but he now recrossed the river, and joined forces with Bábá Bír Singh and the Siálkot princes. The minister had some difficulty in inducing the troops of the Khálsa to take the field; for though they were ready enough to regard the Sindhanwália as a traitor who was plotting to deliver his countrymen into the hands of the British, they were much averse from taking up arms against the descendants of Ranjít Singh and the holy Bábá, and it was not until Híra Singh had promised to open negotiations with the latter in order to detach them from Attar Singh that they consented to march. Troops were then dispatched simultaneously from Lahore, Kasúr, and Amritsar, and the three detachments, advancing from different sides, completely surrounded the Bábá's camp. The promised negotiations were at once commenced; but the imprudence of Attar Singh, who slew with his own hand one of the Lahore deputies, brought on a general conflict in which he and nearly all his supporters were slain, including Kashmíra Singh and Bábá Bír Singh. Híra Singh was thus rid of a second powerful rival; but the fate of

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, by Major G. Carmichael Smyth, p. 111.

Kashmíra Singh, and still more that of the revered Bába, told heavily against him. The regiments held responsible for the "murders" were styled *gurumúdrs*, or "slayers of the guru," and were for a long time boycotted by the rest of the army.

The minister had, indeed, swept two of his rivals from his path; but the third, and the most dangerous one, had yet to be dealt with. Jowáhir Singh, after his release from confinement (effected through the interposition of the army), had retired to Amritsar, where, for months past, he had been secretly laying his plans for the destruction of the entire Jammu family. During this time he had secured the support of the Akális and the chief *bais* and gurus, as well as of many of the sirdars and military officers who from time to time resorted to the holy city. He now returned to Lahore, to sow the seeds of disaffection among the numerous regiments by which the capital was occupied.

Híra Singh was not personally unpopular; but his government, or rather that of his favourite, the *pandit* Jalla, was thoroughly obnoxious to the whole Sikh community. Able enough in many ways, Jalla altogether failed to appreciate the Sikh character. He recognized as fully as his patron the necessity for conciliating the soldiery; but, in order to furnish himself with the funds indispensable for this purpose, he had recourse to the doubtful expedient of plundering the Sikh sirdars. His wholesale sequestration of fiefs and *jágírs* procured him enemies in every part of the country; while the army, though willing enough to swallow his bribes, deeply resented his arrogance

and his contemptuous treatment of men of rank of their own faith who had occupied honourable positions at the court of Ranjít Singh. In his dealings with the Sikhs, Jalla underrated their national pride and the strength of the spirit of brotherhood which gave them unity. He forgot that the sirdars "were Sikhs equally with the soldiers, and that the 'Khálsa' was a word which could be used to unite the high and the low." He forgot, too, that both he and his patron were aliens, and that that fact was alone sufficient to render their acts unpopular and their positions precarious.

More than once the Panches had demanded the dismissal of Jalla; but on each occasion Híra Singh had contrived to put them off with excuses and promises. Such tactics, however, were of little avail against the machinations of Jowáhir Singh, who, from the hour of his arrival at Lahore, worked unceasingly to feed the discontent of the troops and to fan their smouldering animosity into a flame. The pandit made no effort to conciliate his opponents. Jowáhir Singh he treated with open discourtesy, which exasperated not only that chief himself but every Sikh who witnessed his discomfiture. The climax came when, on December 1, Jalla publicly insulted the Ráni Jindan. Jowáhir, to whom the Ráni complained of her ill-usage, was furious, and the entire Khálsa shared his indignation. Other charges of a similar nature were brought against Híra Singh, and it was further asserted that the pandit had attempted to take the life of the Ráni by poison. A meeting of the *panchayats* was hastily summoned; but before



their deliberations were concluded, the minister and his favourite, perceiving that their rule was at an end, had fled the city. Their intention was to make for Jammu ; but the troops of the Khálsa were in hot pursuit, and ere noon of the following day they were overtaken and slain, and by the evening their heads adorned the gates of the capital.

The ministerial office was not immediately refilled, and for the time everything was in the hands of the Panches, who were themselves little more than the spokesmen of the soldiery. The pay of the latter was again increased, and so often had this measure been repeated during the previous five years that the cost of the army, always a heavy burden to the state, became insupportable. Since the death of Mahárája Ranjít Singh the strength of the regular forces had been almost trebled, and the monthly military expenditure had risen from four lakhs of rupees to nine, equivalent to a yearly expenditure of more than a million pounds sterling. During the same five years, owing to the complete disorganization of the administrative machinery, the income of the state had fallen to the lowest ebb ; indeed, from some of the more recently conquered provinces not a rupee of revenue was coming in. To make provision for this enormous and ever-increasing outlay was, therefore, the first endeavour of the heads of the government. Their second, and, it may be added, their only other endeavour, was to find an outlet for the unwieldy and inflammable forces whose power they dreaded and whose growth they dared not check.

At the commencement of the year 1845 the

chance of a temporary solution of this twofold problem presented itself. In the previous October an estrangement had arisen between the minister and his uncle Ghuláb over the possession of the estates of Suchet Singh and Dhián Singh, and the breach had been widened by the action of the Jammu chief in supporting a second attempt by Peshora Singh to secure the sovereignty of the Punjab. Eventually, however, a more or less amicable settlement had been arrived at, by which Ghuláb had agreed to share his brothers' estates with Híra Singh, withdrawing at the same time his support from Peshora Singh, who fled for safety to the south of the Sutlej. On the downfall of the ministry, Jowáhir Singh, in pursuance of his determination to extirpate the entire Dogra family, set to work to rekindle the quarrel. This was an easy task; for the Panches were ready to jump at any opportunity likely to provide employment for the troops, while the latter welcomed with enthusiasm the prospect of plundering so rich a city as Jammu; and hence, before the end of February, the forces of the Khálsa were on the march for the Dogra capital.

Aware that his own soldiers were unable to cope with those of the Khálsa, Ghuláb Singh decided to rely on the arts of diplomacy, in which he knew that he was more than a match for Jowáhir Singh. He succeeded in opening negotiations with the advancing army; and, on its arrival before Jammu, he went boldly amongst the troops, assuring them of his loyalty to the Khálsa, and distributing presents with so lavish a hand that he came to be known as the

*sona ki kukri*, or "the golden hen." To every soldier in the force he promised a gold bangle and twenty-five rupees, and he offered to pay to the state a fine of thirty-five lakhs. Whilst these transactions were in progress, an altercation between his own followers and some of the soldiers of the Khálsa, resulting in the murder of the Sikh chief Fatteh Singh Mán, who was conducting the negotiations on behalf of Lahore, came very near to ruining all Ghuláb's plans. For two days his capital was in imminent danger; but once more "the jingle of the guinea" saved the situation. This time the Rája took up his abode in the Lahore camp; and so successful was he in buying over the troops to his interests, that Lál Singh, their commander, fearing a general desertion, suggested the propriety of concluding the negotiations at Lahore. In April this course was adopted. Something like half the Lahore troops had by this time sworn to follow Ghuláb Singh; and the wily Dogra set out for the capital of the Punjab in joint command of the army which, but two months before, had been dispatched for his annihilation.

On arrival at the capital, Ghuláb Singh was received in audience by the Ráni, to whom he tendered his submission, and expiated his sins by yielding up the estates and property of his deceased brothers and nephew, and paying a second indemnity of thirty lakhs of rupees. The Ráni treated him with much respect, and bestowed on him many marks of her favour, even to the extent of asking him to accept the office of minister. This dangerous honour he declined, and it was shortly afterwards conferred

on Jowáhir Singh, whose installation took place on May 14. Ghuláb remained at Lahore till the middle of August, when he returned to Jammu, poorer in lands and money, but with his influence firmly established over the troops of the Khálsa.

Had Ghuláb Singh accepted the ministerial office, with his disappointed enemy, Jowáhir Singh, nursing his resentment in the background, his life would not have been worth one month's purchase. Jowáhir's life, on that 14th of May, was worth just four. Only two events in his brief ministry call for notice—namely, the rebellion of Mulráj and of Peshora Singh. The former of these, whose treachery afterwards became the principal cause of the second Sikh war, had, in September 1844, succeeded his father, Diwán Sáwan Mall, as Governor of Múltán. Sáwan Mall had been appointed by Ranjít Singh. He was the most able of all the Mahárája's provincial administrators, and under him Múltán reached a high state of prosperity, yielding in revenue nearly forty lakhs of rupees. Mulráj was likewise a capable man of affairs, and in repressing a mutiny among his Sikh troops had displayed both vigour and resource. But he was cruel and despotic, and the people hated him as much as they had loved his father. On his elevation to the governorship, Mulráj had refused to pay the customary *nazar*<sup>1</sup> to the government, and he now resisted the latter's decision to increase the "rent" of his province. It was, therefore, decided to dispatch a force for the reduction of Múltán. The troops,

<sup>1</sup> *Nazar* (Arabic), a ceremonial gift; a fee paid to government on succeeding to an office or to property.

scenting more plunder, were jubilant; but this time their cupidity was not to be gratified. The prompt action of the government brought Mulráj to his senses, and he lost no time in tendering his submission. The Panches allowed him to purchase forgiveness for eighteen lakhs of rupees, little dreaming that for that sum they had bartered the independence of the Khálsa.

The second rebellion was more characteristic of the period, terminating in the death of its promoter and of the minister of the state. Repeated assurances of support from the troops of the Khálsa induced Peshora Singh to make another effort to establish his claim to the throne of the Punjab. In the month of July he succeeded in gaining possession of the fort of Attock, where he boldly proclaimed himself Mahárája. Again Ghuláb Singh secretly supported him, not, it is needless to say, from feelings of affection, but from the desire to see Jowáhir Singh incur the odium of destroying a prince whose person every Sikh soldier regarded as sacred. Having brought matters to this stage, and knowing that the army of Lahore would be unwilling to take the field, the resourceful Ghuláb privately offered to place at the minister's service tools of his own, who would be unhampered by inconvenient scruples. The offer was accepted; and Fatteh Khán and Chattar Singh, the tools in question, proceeded, with the troops under their command, to Attock. Their method of dealing with the situation more than justified Ghuláb Singh's guarantee. Unable to reduce the fort, they opened negotiations, and with profuse assurances of their



regard for the prince and of their deep interest in his welfare, they offered to conduct him to Lahore, where he would be welcomed by the troops, and all his claims would be favourably considered. Peshora Singh fell into the trap. On quitting the fort he was received by Fattéh Khán and Chattar Singh with every appearance of friendship, and the return march to Lahore was at once commenced. At night, however, he was made a prisoner; and in the morning he was sent back, heavily manacled, to Attock, where he was foully murdered. This fell on August 21.

Nemesis speedily overtook one of the instigators of this crime. Jowáhir Singh had never been popular with the army, who, from the day when he threatened to throw himself on the protection of the British, had not ceased to regard him with suspicion. On more than one occasion he had given them work to do for which they had little appetite, and at the close of the Jammu expedition, had Ghuláb Singh consented to become their minister, they would have welcomed the change. Rájá Lál Singh, the Ráni's favourite, who aimed at the ministerial office, had for some time been busy fomenting the mutinous spirit of the Sikh soldiery; and hence, when the murder of Peshora Singh became known, a storm of indignation arose. A meeting of the *panchayats* was called, and it was settled that death was the only suitable punishment for Jowáhir Singh, who was forthwith commanded to appear before the assembled troops. In vain were the bribes and protestations of the minister; in vain the Ráni threatened and entreated. The Khálsa had spoken, and its decree was inexorable. Mounted on

an elephant, Jowáhir Singh set out to obey the summons. He took with him his nephew, Dhulíp Singh, in the vain hope that the presence of their Mahárája might influence the troops in his favour. On his arrival in their midst "he endeavoured to gain over some influential deputies and officers by present donatives and by lavish promises ; but he was sternly desired to let the Mahárája be removed from his side, and to be himself silent. The boy was placed in a tent near at hand, and a party of soldiers advanced and put the vuzeer to death by a discharge of musketry. Two other persons, the sycophants of the minister, were killed at the same time, but no pillage or massacre occurred ; the act partook of the nature of a judicial process, ordained and witnessed by a whole people." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Sikhs*, by J. D. Cunningham, p. 187.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FIRST SIKH WAR.

THOUGH nothing could exceed the patriotic fervour of the Sikhs, every one of whom was ready to give up his life for the Khálsa, their community was now divided into three distinct and mutually antagonistic parties—the court, the sirdars, and the army. The court regarded every sirdar as a potential enemy, and the sirdars despised and distrusted the court, while the army was equally dreaded by both. The judicial murder of Jowáhir Singh left the administration once more in the hands of the army, and the Panches met in daily council to dictate the policy of the state. The Ráni and the officers of her government were completely at the mercy of this armed parliament, and the sirdars, who were robbed to satisfy its cupidity, looked in vain for a ruler strong enough to break its power and to establish a government under which they could once more enjoy some semblance of security. A second Ranjít Singh might have been able to give them what they desired; but, alas! no second Ranjít Singh was forthcoming.

But the very omnipotence of the army of the Khálsa was the cause which led to its destruction.

Whilst internal anarchy had been sapping the vitality of the state, the attitude of the troops towards their British neighbours had grown more and more hostile; and, by the beginning of the year 1845, the invasion of British India was a constant theme of discussion at the assemblies of the *panchayats*. This hostility, as we have said before, was not the outcome of racial antipathy, but was due to the belief of the Sikhs that the settled policy of the British was territorial aggrandizement, and that they were only awaiting a favourable opportunity to add the Punjab to their dominions. During the previous five years various circumstances had contributed to strengthen this belief. The annexation of Sind in 1843 was taken as evidence of the desire of the British to extend their power, and the troops sent to occupy the province were regarded as a direct menace to the district of Múltán. The chastisement by Sir Charles Napier of a band of Sikh marauders, who in the early part of 1845 raided the newly acquired province, still further strengthened this misconception. In a similar manner, the establishment of a garrison at Firozpúr and the strengthening of sundry posts on the Sutlej frontier, undertaken as a precaution against an irruption of the turbulent Sikh army into British territory, were looked upon as preparations for the march of an army on Lahore. At the same time, rumours were in constant circulation of the intention of the British to take possession of the Sikh territories on the left bank of the Sutlej; and letters purporting to be from the *kardárs*

of these districts were read to the assembled Panches, in which it was stated that the people of their villages were being compelled to pay tribute to the British Government.

Various circumstances combined to precipitate the storm; but the underlying cause of the enmity of the Sikhs was their consistent misunderstanding of the aims and actions of the British authorities. The latter had, indeed, realized that, if anarchy continued to reign in the Punjab, the occupation of that province might be forced upon them. But such a necessity, so far from being one that they were prepared to welcome, was one that they earnestly desired to avert, nor had they taken a single step in anticipation of its arising. The measures adopted to strengthen the Sutlej frontier, which the Sikhs regarded as aggressive preparations, were of a purely defensive character, and as such were undertaken on a much smaller scale than the dangers of the situation demanded, so determined was Sir Henry Hardinge, the Governor-General, to avoid giving any grounds of provocation to the Lahore Government.

These suspicions and rumours permeated all classes of the Sikh community. There were at the Rání's court, and among the better informed sirdars, those who knew them to be groundless; but these were the very men who gave them currency. None knew better than the Rání herself how little likelihood there was of the British making an unprovoked attack on the Punjab. But she and her chief advisers were now no less anxious than the Panches



to see the army of the Khálsa at war with their colossal neighbour; not because they shared the confidence of the troops, who already beheld themselves returning from a victorious campaign laden with the spoils of Delhi, Agra, Benares, and perhaps Calcutta itself, but because they saw in such a war their only chance of freeing themselves from the galling yoke of military despotism. Such men as Ghuláb Singh, Lál Singh, and Tej Singh could have had no doubt as to the ultimate issue of the contest they were instigating; but they knew, as did the Ráni, that the defeat of the army of the Khálsa would mean the destruction of the *panchayats*, and that the destruction of the *panchayats* would give them back the powers they had lost. The independence of their country might, indeed, be curtailed; but it was better to hold office under the ægis of the British Government than to remain subservient to a host of rude and untamable soldiers. Hence, instead of denouncing the crossing of the Sutlej as an act of unrighteous folly, they laid themselves out to feed the excitement of the troops, and to spur the Panches to action.

So great was the Ráni's grief at the death of Jowáhir Singh, and so terrible were the curses she called down on the heads of his murderers, that for a time even the rough soldiers of the Khálsa were touched with remorse, while the Panches strove by every means in their power to assuage her wrath. Every day, surrounded by her women, and with her long hair all dishevelled, the half-frantic woman was to be seen passing on foot through the city to

renew her lamentations at her brother's tomb. At length, however, the fire of her anger having somewhat abated, she presented herself before the assembled councils; and after upbraiding them for their treachery and cruelty, she promised to forgive them on condition that the instigators of the bloody deed were delivered into her hands. But these, all of them members of the Dogra faction, had in the interval safely transferred themselves to Jammu, and the grief-stricken Ráni was fain to content herself with a letter of condolence from Ghuláb Singh, and profuse expressions of regret that his very limited power prevented him from punishing her enemies as they deserved. The troops, at the same time, renewed their assurances of loyalty to herself and Dhulíp Singh, and, to complete the reconciliation, agreed to accept as minister whomsoever she chose to nominate. The Ráni thereupon dismissed them with her blessing, and the pleasing intimation that their services might shortly be required for the invasion of British India.

Whilst the storm was gathering, an ominous calm pervaded the Punjab. War preparations were commenced in earnest throughout the kingdom, and nowhere was anything talked of but the coming struggle. Ordinary tasks were laid aside and party strifes and private feuds were forgotten in the common desire to aid in the arming of the Khálsa. Some of the older sirdars did, it is true, shake their heads and utter words of warning; but finding themselves unheeded, and being, before all else, Sikhs, they gave way to the general enthusiasm, determined,

since the Khálsa was to fight, that it should at least fight with all its strength. At the beginning of November the Ráni announced her intention of making Rája Lál Singh minister, and Sirdar Tej Singh commander of the forces of the state. With unwonted docility, the troops accepted her nominees, and, it being felt that the occasion was a momentous one, the process of their installation was conducted with more than the customary solemnity. The assembly was held at the tomb of Ranjít Singh, the astrologers having first named an auspicious day. The ceremony commenced with the reading of passages from the *Granth Sahib*, and then, the sacred cakes having been distributed, all the sirdars, officers, and Panches "were requested to lay their hands on the grunth and on the hem of the sacred canopy over the shrine of Runjeet, and thus to swear allegiance to Mahárája Dulleep Singh, and obedience to Rája Lál Singh as wuzeer, and to Sirdar Tej Singh as commander-in-chief."<sup>1</sup>

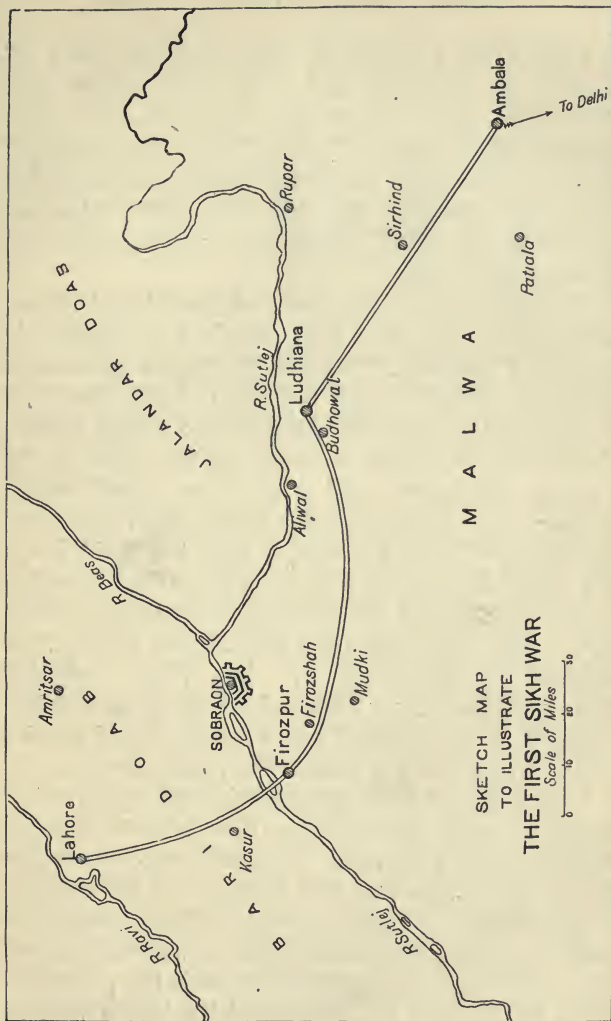
We have no space for a detailed account of the Sikh wars, for which the reader must be referred to such works as *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars*, by General Sir Charles Gough and Arthur D. Innes; *The Life and Campaigns of Hugh, First Viscount Gough*, by R. S. Rait; and the biographies of Viscount Hardinge and Lord Dalhousie. A short summary of the outstanding features of these memorable campaigns is all that can here be attempted.

Before the breaking up of the assembly above

<sup>1</sup> *The Reigning Family of Lahore*, by Major G. Carmichael Smyth, - p. 170.

referred to, definite orders were issued for the march of the army of the Khálsa into British territory; and within a week a body of fifty thousand men with a numerous and powerful artillery, and supported by the contingents of the sirdars, whose numerical strength equalled that of the trained force, moved from Lahore in the direction of Firozpúr, which town was to be the first object of attack. On December 11, the passage of the Sutlej was commenced, Tej Singh commanding the infantry and regular cavalry, and Lál Singh the *ghurcharhas*, or irregular cavalry; and by the evening of the next day the entire force was encamped on the left bank of the stream. The frontier force of the British consisted of the three divisions at Firozpúr, Ludhiána, and Ambála, amounting in all to thirty thousand men with seventy guns, and a reserve of nine thousand men and twenty-six guns at Meerut. General Sir John Littler commanded at Firozpúr; Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-chief, was at Ambála; and the Governor-General himself was at Ludhiána.

The first action took place on December 18, at Mudki, twenty miles to the south-east of Firozpúr, where Lál Singh encountered the Ambála and Ludhiána divisions, which had united, and were advancing to the support of Sir John Littler. Lál Singh's force was defeated with great slaughter and the loss of seventeen guns; but it was night before the Sikhs, who had displayed unlooked-for determination, were driven from the field. Under cover of the darkness they made good their retreat





to Firozshahr, a village situated half-way between Mudki and Firozpúr, and there, during the next two days, they threw up entrenchments and mounted more than a hundred pieces of artillery. Meanwhile the force under Tej Singh had taken up its position before Firozpúr, with the object of preventing Sir John Littler from uniting with the commander-in-chief.

The British had lost heavily at Mudki, and it was not until the 21st that they marched to attack Lál Singh at Firozshahr. The assault was not commenced till three o'clock in the afternoon, Lord Hardinge having decided to await the arrival of Sir John Littler, who was under orders to reinforce him with 5,000 men and 24 guns; and it was one o'clock before the latter, having successfully evaded the vigilance of Tej Singh, effected a junction with the main body. The battle commenced with an artillery duel, in which the heavier guns of the Sikhs gave them the advantage. With great gallantry the British troops then stormed the entrenchments. The Sikhs defended themselves and their guns with even greater determination than at Mudki, and a hand-to-hand conflict ensued which had not ceased when darkness fell.

During the whole of this day Tej Singh lay watching Firozpúr, under the delusion that he was keeping Sir John Littler a prisoner. At night he discovered that he had been outwitted, and hastened to the support of Lál Singh. At eight o'clock in the morning he came in sight of Firozshahr; but he was an hour too late. The Sikh entrenchments were in the possession of the British, and Lál Singh and his troops were in

full retreat towards the Sutlej. Even then, had he only known it, he had his enemy at his mercy. Completely worn out by many hours' continuous fighting, their ammunition all but exhausted, the British could never have survived the onset of the thirty thousand fresh troops which Tej Singh had at his back. But the Sikh commander hesitated. At eleven o'clock he opened fire on the left of his enemy's position, and again hesitated. Four hours later he threatened an attack on their right, and then, to the utter astonishment and intense satisfaction of the weary defenders, his whole force was seen to turn suddenly northwards and move off rapidly in the direction taken by the vanquished battalions of Lál Singh.

At the battle of Firozshahr the British casualties amounted to 2,400, the killed representing considerably more than half this number. The Sikhs lost between four and five thousand men, and left seventy-four guns in the hands of the victors. The precipitate retirement of the Sikhs on December 22 has been attributed to treachery on the part of their leader, and there was much in the conduct of Tej Singh, both prior to and after the commencement of hostilities, which would seem to justify such a view. But it must be borne in mind that though Tej Singh and Lál Singh were, nominally, the leaders of the Khálsa army, their authority was very far from being absolute. The army, as a whole, distrusted them, and regarded the Panches and principal military officers as the real directors of the campaign. It must, therefore, have been with the full approval of

the latter that the retreat from Firozshahr was ordered. It may well be that Tej Singh did not urge his troops to advance, but his influence over them was certainly not sufficient to enable him to hold them back against their will. Whatever lukewarmness there may have been on the part of their leaders, the Sikh soldiers were in deadly earnest, as is amply proved by their desperate resistance in four pitched battles; and had they on this occasion realized their opportunity, they would have stormed the British entrenchments, and it would have been more than the life of Tej Singh was worth to counsel a retreat.

There was now a lull in the storm, and the interval was used by both sides to make good their losses and gather strength for a renewal of the struggle. Guns and supplies were hastily dispatched from Lahore to the Sutlej, and the Sikh soldiers, their energy and determination still unabated, laboured day and night strengthening the defences of their main position at Sobráon, where, in addition to a treble line of entrenchments, they erected a bridge-head of great strength to protect the passage of the river. The British force remained encamped at Firozpúr, awaiting the arrival of a siege-train from Delhi, whilst reinforcements were gradually coming in from Meerut, Agra, and Sabáthu.

Emboldened by the inactivity of their foes, the Sikhs, on January 6, 1846, sent a force of 8,000 men and 70 guns, under the command of Sirdar Ranjúr Singh, to attack Ludhiána. The town was then very much under-garrisoned, and Sir Harry

Smith, who, with a considerable body of troops, had been sent from Firozpúr to cover the approach of the expected siege-train, was ordered to march to its relief. His road thither lay through the village of Badhowál, where the Sikhs had entrenched themselves; but desiring to effect a junction with the Ludhiána troops before giving battle, he made a detour, hoping to pass by unmolested. The Sikhs, however, were on the watch for him, and as he passed the village they opened a heavy fire on his column; and though they failed to prevent his reaching Ludhiána, they killed a number of his men and captured the whole of his baggage. The news of this miniature triumph created great exultation in the ranks of the Khálsa; but other news of a far different character was soon to follow.

On January 22, Ranjúr Singh withdrew to the Sutlej, and Sir Harry Smith occupied Badhowál. Both sides had by this time been reinforced, the Sikhs by 4,000 infantry and 12 guns, and the British by a brigade under Brigadier Wheeler. On the 28th, Sir Harry Smith moved out to attack the enemy, whom he found, after an eight-mile march, at the village of Aliwál, with the river, fordable at that spot, behind them. In the battle which ensued the defeat of the Sikhs was complete and overwhelming. At no time during the Sikh wars was the superiority of the British troops so clearly manifested as at Aliwál. The most notable feature of the day was a magnificent charge by the 16th Lancers, in the course of which a single squadron not only broke but rode through and through a square of Sikh

infantry. The disciplined troops of the Khálsa displayed the highest courage, but they were handicapped in this, as in every other battle they fought, by the absence of generals worthy to lead them. They gave way stubbornly; but with none to rally them their retirement soon became a retreat. "Pursued by the cavalry, who made repeated charges, and pressed by the infantry, they were unable to make any attempt to rally, and flinging themselves into the river, fled to the right bank, leaving all their guns, camp equipage, baggage and stores to fall into the hands of the victors."

This signal disaster was a stunning blow to the Sikh army. In a few hours the ill news reached Lahore, and created the greatest dismay. The troops had by this time lost all confidence in their leaders, and the Panches went in a body to Ghuláb Singh, who had recently arrived at the capital, offering to make him minister, and begging him to proceed at once to the Sutlej and take over the chief command. But the Jammu chief knew that the end was near. So far he had held aloof from the war, waiting on events. The British had as yet no reason for regarding him as their enemy, and he had no intention of endangering the reward he expected to reap for his neutrality. He therefore temporized with the Panches, and, without actually refusing to assume the command of the army, contrived from day to day to postpone his departure till the hour he had been anticipating came—the hour when the army of the Khálsa had no further use for a commander.

The battle of Sobráon was fought on February



10. The delay in the arrival of the British siege-train, which only reached Firozpur on the 6th, was made good use of by the Sikhs. Every day they continued to add to the strength of their position; and by the 10th the British commander, with a force of 15,000 men all told, was faced with the task of attacking "a position covered with formidable entrenchments, and occupied by no fewer than 30,000 men with 70 pieces of artillery, united by a bridge of boats to a reserve on the opposite bank of the river." As at Firozshahr, the battle commenced with an artillery duel, in which again the Sikhs had the better of the exchange, the lighter guns of the British making little impression on their works. The cannonade was kept up for nearly three hours, after which the British advanced to the storm of the scarcely damaged defences. Then followed a hand-to-hand struggle of the fiercest description. The Sikhs, knowing that they had staked their all on the issue of the day, fought with the courage of despair. But the British brigades, though more than once checked by the murderous fire of the Sikh artillery, captured position after position, and by one o'clock in the afternoon their victory was complete.

But though the prize went to the British, the honours of that great and glorious fight were shared equally by victors and vanquished. How gallantly the Sikhs at Sobraon upheld the honour of the Khálsa is proved by the words of the British commander. In his official dispatch, written on February 13, to the Governor-General, Sir Hugh Gough thus described the struggle after the first line of breastworks had

been carried :—"The battle raged with uncontrollable fury from right to left. The Sikhs, even when at particular points their entrenchments were mastered with the bayonet, strove to regain them by the fiercest conflict, sword in hand. Nor was it until the cavalry of the left, under Major-General Sir Joseph Thackwell, had moved forward and ridden through the opening in the entrenchments made by our sappers, in single file, and re-formed as they passed them; and the 3rd Dragoons—whom no obstacle usually held formidable by horse appears to check—had on this day, as at Firozshahr, galloped over and cut down the obstinate defenders of batteries and forced works, and until the full weight of three divisions of infantry, with every field artillery gun that could be sent to their aid, had been cast into the scale, that victory finally declared for the British. The fire of the Sikhs first slackened and then nearly ceased, and the victors then pressing them on every side, precipitated them in masses over their bridge and into the Sutlej, which a sudden rise of seven inches had rendered hardly fordable."<sup>1</sup>

On the British side the killed and wounded numbered nearly 2,500; while the Sikh losses amounted to over 8,000 men, of whom a large number perished in their efforts to cross the swollen river. On the evening of the 10th the British force began to move across the Sutlej, and by the 13th it had encamped at Kasúr, thirty-six miles from Lahore, without another shot having been fired against it.

<sup>1</sup> Dispatch of Lord Gough to the Governor-General of India, dated February 13, 1846.

## CHAPTER XII.

### UNDER BRITISH PROTECTION.

THE Court party at Lahore wasted no time in useless lamentations over the fate of the army of the Khálsa, but straightway applied themselves to the task of getting the best terms they could out of the conquerors. Indeed, the Ráni and those about her had no tears to shed. Their fetters were broken; and if only the subjugation of the state could be averted, they felt that the future could be faced with equanimity. As for the Sikh soldiers, they were cowed and bitterly disappointed. They had taken up arms in the full belief that they were setting out to overthrow the British Ráj, and in the fourth round of the contest they had been "counted out." But though they took their punishment like men, and acknowledged that they had been well and fairly beaten, they nevertheless attributed their defeat to the incompetence, if not to the treachery, of their leaders, and man for man they still considered themselves a match for their conquerors. They still believed in the destiny of the Khálsa, and that at no distant date they would once more raise the triumphant cry, *Wá! Guruji ká Khálsa! Wá! Guruji ki Futeh!*

On learning that the Governor-General was with the forces at Kasúr, the Ráni, with the consent of the sirdars and *Panches*, dispatched Rája Ghuláb Singh to meet him on her behalf, and to offer her submission together with that of the Maharája Dhulíp Singh. She rightly judged that the Jammu chief would prove a more acceptable ambassador than either Lál Singh or Tej Singh, and she entrusted him with full powers to treat with the British, on condition that they were prepared to recognize a Sikh government at Lahore. The Rája reached Kasúr on the morning of the 15th, and was at once conducted into the presence of the Governor-General. Being the representative of an unfriendly power, his reception was marked by no outward ceremonial, and no salute was fired. Sir Henry Hardinge, in the course of the interview, pointed out to the Rája the serious nature of the offence which his government had committed, in that, without provocation on the part of the British, and in the face of an existing treaty of amity, it had permitted its army to undertake the invasion of British India. He then informed him that he was resolved to show to the world at large that such insults were not to be offered to the government of British India with impunity; and that if the ruler of Lahore would continue to be regarded as a friendly sovereign, he must submit to the terms now to be offered to him—namely, the cession to the British of “all his forts, territories, and rights situate between the rivers Beas and Sutlej,” the payment of a war indemnity of one and a half million pounds sterling, the reduction of the Sikh

army to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry, and the surrender of all the guns that had been turned against the British in the recent campaign. Before the proceedings terminated, the Governor-General commended the Rájá for his prudence in holding aloof from the unwarrantable action of the Sikh government, and assured him that his behaviour would receive recognition.

Two days later, there arrived to make his submission in person "the little Maharaja himself—a charming child of eight years—acting his part," as the Governor-General describes him, "without any fear and with all the good breeding peculiar to the eastern people."<sup>1</sup> Dhulíp Singh remained in the British camp with Sir Henry Hardinge, and, on the 20th of the month, accompanied him on his march to the capital. As they approached their destination, they were met by Ghuláb Singh and the principal sirdars, whereupon a procession was formed which made a complete circuit of the city. Mahárája Dhulíp Singh was then escorted to his palace by four regiments of cavalry, and, the general terms of the treaty having been agreed to, a salute was fired by the artillery in honour of his arrival. The main army encamped outside the city; and two days later "the thoroughness of its recent triumphs was proclaimed to the Indian world by the quartering of British regiments within the citadel of Lahore."

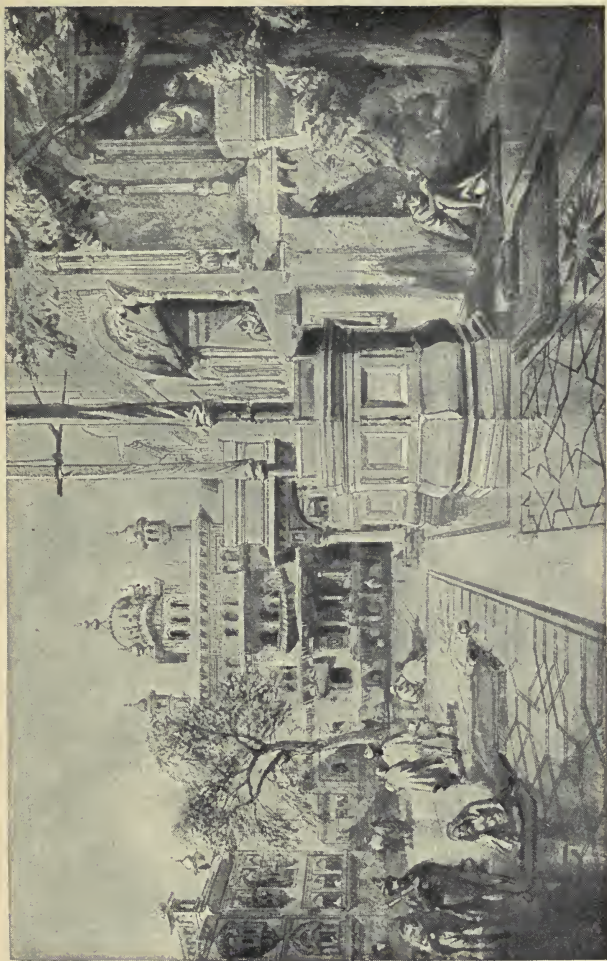
The Treaty of Lahore was not finally ratified till March 9, by which time it had been found

<sup>1</sup> *Viscount Hardinge*, by Charles, Second Viscount Hardinge, p. 125.



necessary to make some important modifications in the terms originally proposed. It was found that the state was unable to pay more than a third of the stipulated war indemnity, and, in lieu of the remainder, the British Government was offered, and accepted, the province of Kashmír. As, however, the latter had no desire to be burdened with the administration of a province separated from the frontiers of British India by 300 miles of foreign territory, it was decided to make it over to Rájá Ghuláb Singh, in consideration of his services "towards promoting the restoration of the relations of amity between the Lahore and British governments," and a clause binding the Maharája to recognize his independent authority was inserted in the treaty, the British Government engaging "to admit the Rájá to the privilege of a second treaty." Furthermore, the government of Lahore, in view of the difficulties anticipated in effecting the required reduction in the state army, requested Sir Henry Hardinge to consent to the occupation of the citadel of Lahore by British troops till the end of the year. This request, after some demur owing to the risks involved, was granted, and a clause to that effect was embodied in a supplementary agreement signed on March 11.

The "second treaty" mentioned above was concluded at Amritsar on March 16. By it the British Government transferred the province of Kashmír "for ever, in independent possession, to Muharaja Golab Singh, and the heirs male of his body;" and the said "Muharaja" agreed, in consideration of the transfer, to pay the British Government



COURTYARD OF THE GOLDEN TEMPLE, AMRITSAR.  
(*Victoria and Albert Museum, Indian Section.*)

the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees, a sum practically equivalent to the unpaid portion of the war indemnity. In the year 1808, Ghuláb Singh was earning three rupees a month and his rations as a common soldier in an obscure fortress on the banks of the Jhelam. He was now, while still under sixty years of age, the absolute monarch of 80,000 square miles of territory. If he was not at the top of the ladder of his ambition, he was certainly as high up on it as he deserved to be—higher even than that, in the opinion of many. But whatever his faults, Ghuláb Singh was a statesman of proved ability. At this time he was the only chief in the Punjab fitted to rule a wild country like Kashmír, and the only one capable of paying seventy-five lakhs of rupees for the privilege of doing so.

On the conclusion of these treaties, Sir Henry Hardinge withdrew from Lahore, leaving Colonel Henry Lawrence behind him as his agent. The government of the state was vested in a council of leading men, with Rája Lál Singh as minister. In this council the influence of the court party predominated, and, as a consequence, intrigues of various kinds were soon afoot. The Ráni and her advisers had submitted to the Treaty of Lahore because no other course was open to them; but they were determined to place as many obstacles as possible in the way of its enforcement. In the month of May, the Sikh commandant at Kángra, acting under secret instructions from Lahore, refused to deliver up his fortress to the British, to whom, under the treaty, it now belonged. When, however, he saw himself

surrounded by a strong force with thirty guns ready to open fire on his walls, he had the wisdom to make his submission; but his defiance had caused the British considerable trouble, and did not add to their confidence in the good faith of the Lahore Government.

In October, another and more serious rising took place, this time in Ghuláb Singh's newly acquired kingdom. Lál Singh had witnessed the elevation of his rival to the throne of Kashmír with anything but satisfaction; and he now, with the connivance of the Ráni, secretly instigated Sheikh Imám-ud-dín, the governor of the province, to resist by force of arms the entry of the newly appointed ruler. The matter was reported to the Governor-General, who ordered the immediate dispatch of troops to enforce obedience to the terms of the treaty. The result was, as at Kángra, the speedy submission of the rebellious governor, who, to escape the consequences of his misconduct, placed in the hands of Colonel Lawrence documentary evidence to prove that he had been acting under orders from Lál Singh. The latter was, then and there, charged before the assembled sirdars with having treacherously violated the Treaty of Lahore, and, his guilt having been proved, he was, by the unanimous consent of the assembly, deposed from his office, deprived of his *jágírs*, and banished from the kingdom of Lahore.

The trial of Lál Singh took place on December 4, and the same day the ministry was entrusted to a committee of four, consisting of Sirdars Tej Singh and Sher Singh (the latter the brother-



in-law of the Maharája), Diwán Dína Náth, the finance minister, and Fakír Núr-ud-dín, a brother of Ranjít Singh's favourite adviser, Azzíz-ud-dín. The dismissal of her favourite and accomplice was a great blow to the Ráni. With the support of Dína Náth, she proposed that she herself should be placed at the head of the administration; but the sirdars, the only class in the country genuinely anxious for the restoration of law and order, stoutly opposed such a step. Nay, more; so alarmed were these men at the difficulties of the task which confronted them, the task not only of establishing a strong and permanent government, but of combating the intrigues of the court and suppressing the dangerous temper of the troops, and that without a British force to support them—for the time for the withdrawal of the army of occupation was at hand—that they decided to ask the British Government to take entire control of the administration of the state until the Maharája should attain his majority.

On December 15, Lord Hardinge, who the day previous had arrived at Bhairówál, a few marches from Lahore, received a deputation of the sirdars, and made known to them the terms on which he was prepared to grant their request. To these the sirdars gave their unanimous consent, and on the 16th the Treaty of Bhairówál was signed. Its main provisions were as follows:—That a British Resident at Lahore should be appointed by the Governor-General; that the administration of the country should be conducted by a council of regency, com-



posed of leading chiefs and sirdars, acting under the British Resident, who should have full authority to direct and control the duties of every department; that a British force should remain at Lahore for the protection of the Mahárāja and the preservation of the peace of the country; that the Governor-General should be at liberty to post British troops in any fortress whose occupation he might consider necessary; that the Lahore state should pay to the British Government twenty-two lakhs of rupees for the maintenance of this force, and, to meet the expenses incurred by the British Government, the sum of one and a half lakhs of rupees should be set apart annually for the maintenance of the mother of Mahárāja Dhulíp Singh; and lastly, that the provisions of the treaty should have effect during the minority of Mahárāja Dhulíp Singh, and should cease and determine on his Highness attaining the full age of sixteen years, or on the 4th September of the year 1854.

The new council of regency consisted of eight members, amongst them being the four chiefs already mentioned as having charge of the ministry. The first Resident was Colonel Henry Lawrence, whose talent for administration, great nobility of character, and intimate knowledge of the Sikh people, pre-eminently fitted him for the post. The British officers appointed as his assistants were some of the ablest men that the Government of India had at its disposal; indeed, there could be no stronger proof of the latter's desire to save the kingdom of Lahore than the selection, for the administration of

its affairs, of such men as Henry Lawrence, John Nicholson, and Herbert Edwardes. The first measure to which the Resident gave his attention was the reduction of the army, a matter requiring very delicate handling. It was, however, by a judicious combination of tact, patience, and firmness, successfully accomplished. The disbanded regiments received the arrears of pay due to them, and everything was done to induce the men either to join the British service or to return to peaceful occupations. The reconstruction, or rather the building anew, of the machinery of government was then vigorously taken in hand. A penal code adapted to the customs and traditions of the country was drawn up, lands were surveyed, rates and assessments were made less burdensome, many obnoxious taxes were abolished, and the collectors of revenue were deprived of their facilities for robbing either the cultivators or the state.

But though the population of the Punjab as a whole began rapidly to appreciate the advantages of living under an orderly and just administration, the Sikhs themselves welcomed the new order of things with anything but enthusiasm. They felt that their position as the ruling community was being undermined. British methods of government might be superior to their own, but they did not want British methods, and the more popular these became the deeper grew their jealousy and resentment. Moreover, the Hindu and Muhammadan communities derived greater benefit than they did from the reforms that were being instituted. Many of

the more well-to-do Sikhs lived on rent-free lands, and it made no difference to them whether rates of assessment were high or low, unless they happened to be collectors of revenue, and then they preferred them to be high. Muhammadans and Hindus they were accustomed to regard as mere producers of revenue—not as fellow-subjects entitled to equal rights with themselves. Equality within the limits of the Khálsa was a doctrine which every Sikh was prepared to uphold, but the equality of all communities within the limits of the Punjab was the worst form of heresy. Then, again, there were the disbanded soldiers. Many of these had, it is true, settled down to peaceful pursuits; but there was still a large number of them who were, as Lawrence himself described it, “afloat on the surface of society.” These men lived by methods which were by no means facilitated by the growth of law and order, and every measure which tended to promote public security increased their discontent.

No one, perhaps, was less satisfied with the terms of the Treaty of Bhairowál than the Ráni Jindan, who found herself completely excluded from any share in the government of the state. All that was now left to her was the power to intrigue, and of this, while her opportunities lasted, she made full use. She intrigued with her banished favourite Lál Singh, she endeavoured to corrupt the British sepoy troops at Lahore, she plotted to assassinate Tej Singh, and she carried on a treasonable correspondence with Mulráj, the Governor of Múltán. To the remonstrances of the Government she sent only

contemptuous replies, and eventually carried her insolence to the extent of inducing the youthful Mahárāja to defy in open durbar the Resident and his Council. This crowning insult destroyed any remnants of patience lurking in the mind of Colonel Lawrence, and the "Messalina of the Punjab" was forthwith placed in a palanquin and conveyed under a strong escort to the fortress of Sheikhpúra. Even here she did not cease her activities, and in the end she was carried across the frontier, and placed in confinement at Benares.

But despite the spirit of discontent which pervaded practically every section of the Sikh community, there reigned, at the close of 1847, such peace and quietness in the Punjab as that country had not known for years past. To the ordinary observer the British protectorate appeared an unqualified success, and as such it was regarded both in England and India. Even Lord Hardinge, before setting out for England in January 1848, "assured Lord Dalhousie, his successor, that so far as human foresight could predict, 'it would not be necessary to fire a gun in India for seven years to come.'"<sup>1</sup> Colonel Lawrence, who laid down his office at the same time, looked forward, though with less confidence, to the success of the scheme he had laboured so hard to establish. "I can certify," he wrote, after six months as Resident at Lahore, "to this people having settled down in a manner that could never have been hoped or believed of them." But, with a true insight into the dangers of the situation, he added that "if every

<sup>1</sup> *The Marquess of Dalhousie*, by Sir W. W. Hunter, p. 62.

Sirdar and Sikh in the Punjab were to avow himself satisfied with the humble position of his country, it would be the extreme of infatuation to believe him, or to doubt for a moment that, among the crowd who are loudest in our praise, there are many who cannot forgive our victory or even our forbearance, and who chafe at their own loss of power, in exact proportion as they submit to ours."

The fact that the Sikhs resented the control of their conquerors is no censure on Lord Hardinge's policy. The only alternative to a British protectorate was annexation, which both on military and political grounds was considered impracticable. At the close of the first Sikh war the task of annexation would have imposed a very severe strain on the military resources of the Government; for, although the army of the Khálsa had been thoroughly defeated, there was still a sufficient force in the Punjab to render the complete subjugation of the country a long and extremely arduous undertaking. Moreover, the "buffer state" policy had not been abandoned, and both the East India Company and the Government of India were at one in their desire for the establishment of a strong and friendly government at Lahore. In a British protectorate lay the only chance of securing such a result. The possibilities of success were not great, but they were sufficient to make the risk of failure worth incurring. Difficulties were, of course, expected. The sudden introduction into a half wild country of the restraints of a civilized government was bound to give rise to discontent, mistrust, and ill-will. But, provided no untoward



circumstance arose to stir such smouldering elements of unrest into active rebellion, there was good reason to believe that, ere the expiry of the term of the protectorate, the British administrators of the Punjab would have won the confidence and the co-operation of the Sikh people, and that, on the coming of age of the Mahárāja, "his country would be made over to him in a much improved and prosperous condition."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Lord Hardinge's dispatches of September 1846.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE SECOND SIKH WAR.

THANKS in no small measure to the efforts of the Rání Jindan, the "untoward circumstance" did arise. In the month of March 1848, while Lord Dalhousie was still being congratulated on having assumed office "at a time when the last obstacle to the complete, and apparently final, pacification of India has been removed," there was seen from the walls of Lahore a cloud, far away to the south-west, no bigger than a man's hand. Before a month had passed, it had grown into a big, angry-looking cloud; and by the end of six months the horizon on every side was black with the oncoming storm. For the full story of the second Sikh war, the reader must again be referred to the works mentioned on page 171, with the addition to the list of *A Year on the Punjab Frontier, in 1848-9*, by Major Herbert Edwardes, one of the most interesting of the many books dealing with the Punjab wars. As in the case of the earlier campaign, we shall do no more than indicate the chief events in the last and gallant struggle of the Sikhs for national independence.

It will be remembered that during the short min-

istry of Jowáhir Singh, Mulráj, the Khatri governor of Múltán, had refused to pay his "footing," and had only escaped deposition by submitting to a fine of eighteen lakhs of rupees. He now found, or professed to find, that it was impossible to provide the yearly revenue which his province was expected to yield, and in the beginning of March he tendered his resignation to the Government at Lahore, by whom it was promptly accepted. Sirdar Khán Singh was appointed to the vacant office, and, accompanied by two British officers, Mr. Vans Agnew of the Bengal Civil Service and Lieutenant Anderson of the Bombay Fusiliers, he proceeded to Múltán to take over charge from Mulráj. The party reached Múltán on April 18, and on the following day the new governor was duly installed. Up to that point all had gone well; but, as Vans Agnew and Anderson were returning to their camp without the fort, they were suddenly attacked by some of Mulráj's men. Both were severely wounded, but managed, with the help of their escort and Khán Singh's followers, to make their escape to a neighbouring mosque. On the morning of the 20th, Mulráj, who, at the commencement of the previous day's affray, had galloped off to his summer residence, returned to the fort, where he reinstated himself and openly declared his hostility to the British. The guns of the fort were turned on the mosque in which Vans Agnew and Anderson had taken refuge; and in the evening the two wounded officers, deserted by their escort, were brutally murdered.

On the night of the 19th, Vans Agnew had man-

1



2



3



4



1. Mulráj, Diwán of Múltán. 2. The Ráni Jindan. 3. Rāja Ghulāb Singh. 4. Sirdar Sher Singh. (*India Office.*)

aged to dispatch an urgent message for assistance to Lieutenant Edwardes, the officer in charge of Deraját, the district between the Indus and the Sulaiman Mountains forming the western frontier of the Punjab. Edwardes, with the 400 men who composed his escort, at once set out for Múltán. But it was not until he was joined by General Cortland from Bannu, and the loyal Pathán troops of the Nawáb of Baháwalpúr, that he was able to commence active hostilities against the 4,000 men whom Mulráj brought out to meet him. When thus reinforced, he succeeded, though his little army was still many times outnumbered by that of the rebel leader, in winning two pitched battles, one on June 18, at Kinéri, sixty miles from Múltán, and the other on July 1, at Saddosam, almost within sight of the city. After his second defeat, Mulráj shut himself up in his fortress, while Edwardes sent an urgent appeal to the Resident at Lahore for siege guns and additional troops.

At Lahore the Múltán outbreak was regarded as an act of hostility, not against the British, but against the Sikh government, and the only assistance that had, so far, been sent to Edwardes consisted of Sikh troops under the command of Sirdar Sher Singh. The new demand for a European force and a siege-train Lord Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, was against complying with, partly because he deemed the season unfavourable for the movement of troops, and partly because he wished to avoid a step likely to precipitate a general rising, to meet which his preparations were not yet complete. It was not



until August, when it had become apparent that the Múltán revolt was spreading, and when even in Lahore itself sedition was rife, that he decided that active measures could no longer be delayed; and it was September 4 before the force which was then dispatched—a force of 6,000 men, a third of them English, with 37 guns—was encamped before the walls of Múltán. The delay was fortunate for Mulráj, for it enabled him to complete his preparations for defence, and provided him with opportunities—at least we may safely conjecture that it did—for a clandestine correspondence with Sher Singh.

The siege commenced on September 5, and was carried on with varying success till the 14th, when Sher Singh, with the whole of his Sikh contingent, went over to the side of Mulráj. There was nothing for it but to raise the siege, and the next day the British force moved off to Surájkhund, some seven miles to the south of Múltán, there to await the reinforcements which had already been ordered up from Bombay. If any doubt yet remained as to the real significance of the Múltán outbreak, it was effectually dispelled by the news of Sher Singh's desertion. The Khálsa was up, and up not only in the south-west, but in Bannu, in Pesháwar, and in Hazára; and if King Ghuláb Singh was not up too, it was only because that astute monarch was waiting till the success of the Khálsa looked a little more certain.

The chief organizer of the risings in the north-west was Chattar Singh, the father of Sher Singh, who held charge of the district of Hazára; and he

was ably seconded by our old Bárakzai acquaintance, Sultán Muhammad Khán, the governor of Kohát. Together they made overtures to the Amír, Dost Muhammad Khán, offering him, as the price of his assistance, the much coveted province of Pesháwar, a bribe which the Afghan monarch was only too ready to swallow. By the middle of October, the whole of the north-west, except Attock, was in the hands of Chattar Singh; and the British officers stationed in Hazára and Pesháwar were his prisoners. Communications were opened with Sher Singh at Múltán, and it was arranged that he should make his way to Gujrát where, on the fall of Attock, he would be joined by his father, and the combined forces would then march on Lahore. At the same time proclamations were issued throughout the kingdom urging the disbanded soldiers to join whichever leader they could most quickly reach, and calling upon every true Sikh, in the name of the Guru, to gird up his loins and take part in the holy war which was to free the Khálsa from the oppression of the Feringhis. "Whoever acts accordingly will obtain grace in this world, and hereafter; and he who acts otherwise is excluded from the pale of the Sikh faith."<sup>1</sup>

Sher Singh set out from Múltán on October 9, and so rapid were his movements that his whole force was out of sight before General Whish, who had taken over command from Edwardes, had realized what was happening. Proceeding northwards along the right bank of the Chenáb, the Sikh commander, early in November, reached Rámnagar, where he entrenched

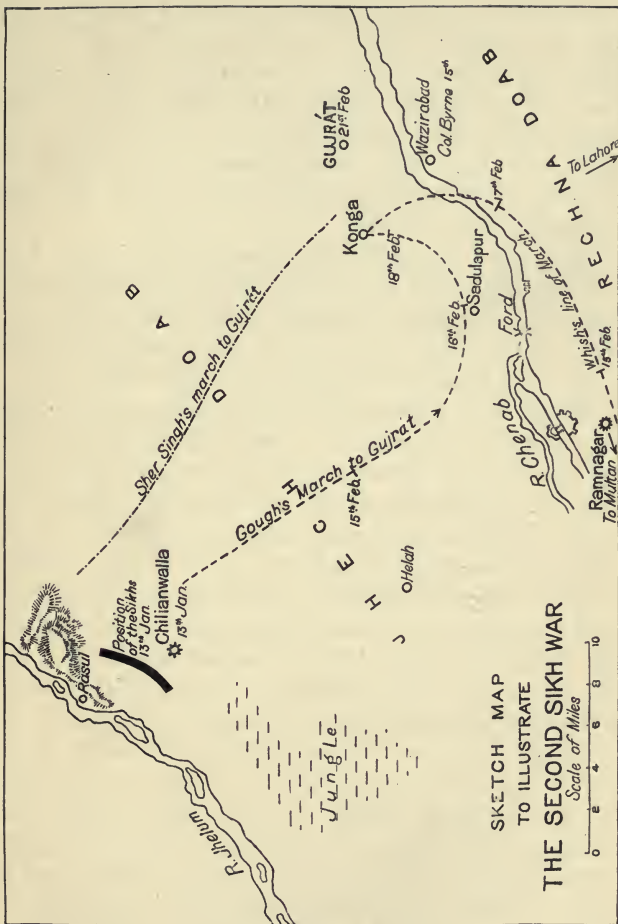
<sup>1</sup> See *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, vol. ii. p. 624.

himself so as to command the ford of the river, with a portion of his force posted on the left bank. Here he expected to be joined by the Bannu regiments, some of whom had already come in, and here the opening action of the second Sikh war took place. On the 22nd of the month his position was attacked by Lord Gough, who had left Lahore a week before with 20,000 men and 100 guns. In the course of the fight both sides lost heavily. The Sikh troops on the left bank of the Chenáb were driven back across the river with great slaughter; but to compensate for this partial defeat, Sher Singh had the satisfaction of cutting up a regiment of British cavalry who had, with more gallantry than discretion, charged down into the river bed, where the deep sand and mud rendered their horses helpless. On December 3 another indecisive engagement took place at Sadúlápúr, where, had not the British plans miscarried, Sher Singh's force would have been caught between two fires, and would in all probability have been annihilated. As it was, the two portions into which Lord Gough's army was divided failed to co-operate, and the Sikhs were able to withdraw unmolested from the Chenáb to the Jhelam, and to take up a strong position at Rassúl, on the banks of the latter river, commanding the road along which the division under Chattar Singh was to approach.

After Sadúlápúr the whole British force crossed the Chenáb; but instead of pressing on to Rassúl, Lord Gough, acting under the instructions of the Governor-General, halted at Héla, fifteen miles from that place, to wait until the fall of Múltán should

enable General Whish to join him. After a delay of five weeks, however, during which time Sher Singh was busy entrenching himself, news arrived that Attock had fallen, which meant that reinforcements would speedily arrive, not for the British but for Sher Singh. For two months Lieutenant Herbert, the British representative at Attock, had kept Chattar Singh at bay; and it was only when the latter was reinforced by the Pathán troops of Dost Muhammad that Herbert was forced to evacuate his stronghold, thus leaving the way clear for the Sikh leader to march to the assistance of Sher Singh.

Determined to strike his blow before Chattar Singh could effect a junction with his son, Lord Gough, on the morning of January 13, marched on the Sikh position, and in the afternoon the battle of Chilianwála was fought. The results of this sanguinary encounter were of a negative description. By the time night put an end to the fighting, the British were in possession of the field of battle, while the Sikhs had made an orderly retreat into their entrenchments at Rassúl. The fight lasted for little more than three hours, but the slaughter was tremendous. On the side of the British "thirty-three officers, fifty-three sergeants or havildars, five hundred and eleven common soldiers had fallen dead, a hundred men and four sergeants were missing, few of whom returned alive; while the wounded came up to ninety-four officers, one warrant officer, ninety sergeants or havildars, and fourteen hundred and sixty-six men of other ranks. Besides this fearful loss, unequalled in the record of Indian battles, four guns



Burholomew, Edin.



belonging to the troops of Huish and Christie, and five or six colours borne by the 24th foot, the 25th, 30th, 56th native infantry, remaining in the enemy's hands."<sup>1</sup> What wonder that the Sikhs, though their own loss nearly trebled that of the British, were exultant, and that, on regaining the heights of Rassúl, they fired a salute in honour of their success?

For some days after Chilianwála, heavy and continuous rain fell, rendering further operations impossible. Towards evening on the 24th January a Sikh salute of twenty-one guns told the British of the arrival of Chhattar Singh, who brought with him, in addition to his troops, his British prisoners, George Lawrence, Herbert, and Bowie. Two days later a royal salute from the British camp announced the fall of Múltán, and the same day the Sikhs made an attempt to negotiate terms. "I was looking through the battery spy-glass at the Sikh camp," wrote a British subaltern in his diary, "when our guns thundered out the welcome news, and I could see as the loud report from the heavies came booming through the air it seemed to swarm with human beings. Thousands upon thousands seemed to be rushing about not knowing what to make of it. Bowie, one of our politicals, came into our camp to-day on parole, with a proposition from Sher Singh as to terms; but the only terms we can give them, I suspect, they will find hard to swallow, without a little more fighting—namely, unconditional

<sup>1</sup> *History of the British Empire in India*, by Lionel James Trotter, vol. i. p. 186.

surrender and giving up all their arms. He says that Sher Singh treats him like a brick; he has twenty men to guard him all day and night, and such is their idea of us, a bottle of brandy is placed on his breakfast-table every morning. They boast that they are not at all afraid of us, and if it were not for those madmen of Europeans, they would thrash our sepoys hollow.”<sup>1</sup> Our British subaltern was right. Bowie was instructed to inform Sher Singh that the Government of Her Majesty the Queen was not in the habit of making terms with a rebel in arms.

The news of the capitulation of Múltán had taken four days to reach the British camp. The Bombay column had joined General Whish on December 26, and on the following day the siege of the fortress had begun. Even with a force of 30,000 men and 60 siege-guns, a whole month elapsed before Mulráj was driven to surrender. The city was captured on January 2, a British shell having exploded the powder magazine of the besieged; but the citadel still held out, and it was not until the 22nd, “after forty thousand shot and shell had been poured into Múltán,” that the defence was abandoned, and Mulráj delivered himself up to the British. He had put up a gallant defence, and great must have been the eagerness of the British soldiers to set eyes on the man who had so long held them at bay. We can well imagine how “his spare figure and dignified air excited their comment and admiration as he rode down the long files of British troops from

<sup>1</sup> *Leaves from the Journal of a Subaltern*, p. 124-5.

the 'Gate of Dignity' to the tent of the general. Mounted on a well-bred Arab splendidly caparisoned, and himself radiant in enamelled armour and gilded silks, he illustrated Eastern fatalism, submissive to destiny, but never dejected." <sup>1</sup>

On the morning of February 12 the entrenchments at Rassúl were found to be empty. During the previous night, the Sikhs had evacuated their position, and passing round the flank of the British army had moved off eastwards, with the apparent intention of crossing the Chenáb and marching on Lahore. By this time General Whish, who had set out from Múltán on December 27, had reached Rámnaggar; and, being apprised of Sher Singh's movements, he dispatched a brigade under Colonel Byrne to Wazírábád to prevent the enemy from crossing the river. Byrne was only just in time to accomplish this. On the morning after his arrival at Wazírábád the Sikhs appeared on the right bank, but finding the fords guarded they withdrew to Gujráat. Thither they were followed by the main army under Lord Gough, which, uniting with Whish's division, advanced on the morning of the 21st to give battle to the Sikh host.

There was nothing indecisive about the battle of Gujráat. Reinforced by Chattar Singh and 1,500 Afghans under the son of Dost Muhammad, Sher Singh was now at the head of 40,000 men with 60 guns. Lord Gough's force numbered only 25,000, but for the first time since the commencement of the

<sup>1</sup> *Dalhousie's Administration of British India*, by Edwin Arnold, vol. i. p. 159.

Sikh wars he was superior to his opponent in artillery, having at his disposal the powerful eighteen-pounders which had been brought up from Bombay to the siege of Múltán. The action began at 7.30 a.m. with a vigorous cannonade on both sides. But though the Sikh gunners fought with their accustomed skill and hardihood, "in quickness of fire surpassing, in truth of aim very nearly equalling, the world-famous artillerymen of Bengal and Bombay,"<sup>1</sup> their efforts were unavailing against the more numerous and heavier guns of their assailants. By 11.30 their fire had practically ceased, nearly all of their sixty guns being either dismounted or withdrawn, whilst their defences were shattered to pieces. When the cannonade was finished, the British infantry, supported by the horse-artillery, advanced, and by the end of an hour the Sikh position had been carried at the point of the bayonet. At 1 o'clock the British were in undisputed possession of Sher Singh's camp, his guns, his ammunition, his baggage, and his stores, while the cavalry on both flanks were in hot pursuit of the now utterly routed army of the Khálsa. On the morning after the battle a pursuing force of 12,000 men—horse, foot, and artillery—under General Sir Walter Gilbert, continued the chase. The Sikhs made no attempt to rally; and at Ráwal-Pindi, on March 12, Sher Singh and all that was left of his broken army came in and surrendered. Thirty-five chiefs laid down their swords at Gilbert's feet; and afterwards the Sikh soldiers, advancing one

<sup>1</sup> *History of the British Empire in India*, by Lionel James Trotter, vol. i. p. 195.

by one, flung each his arms on a heap in front of the general's tent. "I never saw"—so runs the entry in the subaltern's diary—"anything like the reluctance with which they seemed to part with their weapons. Many of them were fine grey-haired old fellows, with large flowing white beards, probably some of Ranjeet Singh's veterans. One old fellow I noticed in particular: he stood for a long time looking wistfully at his arms and the pile before him, and evidently could not make up his mind to give them up. At last the officer on duty came up and touched him on the shoulder, and ordered him to move on; he then threw down his sword and matchlock with a crash, and turned away saying, with tears in his eyes, 'All my work is done now.' After they had deposited their weapons, they went away—goodness knows where—probably without a farthing in their pockets to buy food with. There was an immense pile of muskets, matchlocks, tulwars, spears, zamborucks, and six or seven guns of heavier metal, and one ten-inch mortar. As I went away I met a company of pioneers coming to break up the matchlocks. The swords will probably be sold by auction."<sup>1</sup>

The splendid bravery and the fervid patriotism displayed by the Sikhs throughout the Punjab wars will always be remembered by the British with admiration and respect. It is difficult to read unmoved the story of the surrender of Sher Singh's army. But, while we pay the highest possible tribute to the gallantry of the soldiers of the Khálsa, we

<sup>1</sup> *Leaves from the Journal of a Subaltern*, p. 189.



cannot but bear in mind how completely they brought their fate upon themselves. They embarked on the first Sikh war in the belief that the British were meditating the annihilation of the Khálsa. Their defeat laid their kingdom prostrate at the feet of the British Government; but the latter, instead of annihilating it, employed every means in its power to give it life, strength, and permanence. They had confessed their inability to administer their own affairs, and had themselves begged for the establishment of a British protectorate. The request was a wise one, and was complied with; after which only one thing was necessary to enable the British Government to carry out its purpose of handing over, in 1854, a "much improved and prosperous kingdom" to Mahárāja Dhulíp Singh. That one essential thing was the co-operation of the Sikh people. Without this, the Khálsa was doomed; with it, there was hardly a limit to the prosperity to which it might attain.

But the Sikhs gave no thought to the future. They were conscious only that an alien hand was usurping their powers, restricting their liberties, and disbanding their armies, and in this they saw, not the future greatness of the Khálsa, but only their present humiliation. They had asked for the protectorate; but as soon as it became an accomplished fact, and they saw a British officer virtually in possession of the throne of Ranjít Singh, they repented of what they had done. The measures of the new administration galled them, not because they were strange or irksome, but because they were

imposed by a foreign hand. The remedy seemed worse than the disease; and hence the Sikhs banded themselves together to oppose the only system which could possibly save their kingdom. The second Sikh war was an even greater blunder than the first—greater because irretrievable.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### ANNEXATION—AND AFTER.

WHEN Lord Hardinge, in the hope of preserving the Sikh kingdom, concluded the Treaty of Lahore, he was far from confident of the ultimate success of his scheme; but "considering the importance of the results aimed at" he believed it to be worth trying. "I confess," he wrote to Henry Lawrence, "I think the probability is against the continuance of a Sikh Government;"<sup>1</sup> and on March 11, 1846, he thus concluded his address to the assembled sirdars: "Success or failure is in your own hands; my co-operation shall not be wanting; but, if you neglect this opportunity, no aid on the part of the British Government can save the state." Lord Dalhousie came to India fully prepared to continue the policy of his predecessor; but the outbreak of the second Sikh war rendered such a course impossible. "There was no more sincere friend," he wrote to the same officer, Lawrence, "of Lord Hardinge's policy to establish a strong Hindu Government between the Sutlej and the Khaibar than I. I have done all that man

<sup>1</sup> See *Sir Henry Lawrence*, by Lieutenant-General M'Leod Innes, p. 59.

could do to support such a government and to sustain that policy—I no longer believe it feasible to do so.”

On March 29, by order of the Governor-General, Sir Henry Elliot, the Foreign Secretary, held a *darbar* at Lahore for the purpose of making known the decision of the Government of India. It was attended by the boy-maharaja, seated, for the last time, on the throne of his ancestors, and all the Sikh chiefs then present in the capital, while the proceedings were watched by a vast concourse of spectators. Amidst a deep silence, the Proclamation of the Annexation of the Punjab was read aloud in English, Persian, and Hindustani. In the equally deep silence which followed, a paper was then handed by Tej Singh to the Maharaja, containing the conditions on which he and his chiefs might assure themselves of generous treatment at the hands of their conquerors. The paper was immediately signed by Dhulip Singh, after which Sir Henry Elliot rose and left the hall. As he did so the British flag was hoisted on the ramparts of the citadel, and the booming of guns announced that the kingdom of Lahore had ceased to exist.

It is impossible to study the history of the Sikhs during the last decade of their kingdom's existence without being led to share Lord Dalhousie's conviction of the “expediency, the justice, and the necessity” of the annexation. The considerations which determined his policy can be best summarized by quoting from the Proclamation itself:—

“The Government of India formerly declared that

it desired no further conquests, and it proved by its acts the sincerity of its professions.

“The Government of India has no desire for conquests now; but it is bound in its duty to provide fully for its own security, and to guard the interests of those committed to its charge.

“To that end, and as the only mode of protecting the state from the perpetual recurrence of unprovoked and wasting wars, the Governor-General is compelled to resolve upon the entire subjection of a people whom their own Government has long been unable to control, and whom (as events have shown) no punishment can deter from violence, and no acts of friendship can conciliate to peace.

“Wherefore the Governor-General has declared, and hereby proclaims, that the kingdom of the Punjab is at an end; and that all the territories of Mahārāja Dhulíp Singh are now and henceforth a portion of the British Empire in India.”

There is little more to be told. Mahārāja Dhulíp Singh was granted a pension of £50,000 a year, and permission to reside wherever he chose in British territory outside the Punjab. His final act of submission was to surrender the Koh-i-nur to the British Government. The precious gem, after lying forgotten for some weeks in the waistcoat-pocket of John Lawrence, was sent to England, where its adventures may be said to have terminated. It was presented to Queen Victoria, together with a letter from Lord Dalhousie containing a complete record of “the vicissitudes through which the Koh-i-noor has passed.” The letter, after telling how Shah Shuja,



on being asked what the stone was worth, had replied that its value was "good fortune; for whoever possessed it had conquered their enemies," ended thus: "The Governor-General very respectfully and earnestly trusts that your Majesty, in your possession of the Koh-i-noor, may ever continue to realize its value as estimated by Shah Sooja." Dhulíp Singh subsequently took up his abode in England, where he embraced Christianity, and lived the life of an English country gentleman.

A few days after the annexation, the Ráni Jindan, disguised in the dress of a female attendant, escaped from her confinement and took refuge with the ruler of Nepál, in whose country, as her machinations were no longer dangerous, she was allowed to remain. She eventually found her way to England. Sher Singh, Chattar Singh, and the other chiefs who had been in arms against the British, were deprived of their landed fiefs, their retainers, and their arms, but were allowed sufficient pensions to enable them to live in retirement in their own villages. To Mulráj a sterner justice was meted out. He was tried before a special court as an accessory, before and after the fact, to the murders of Anderson and Vans Agnew, and was found guilty and sentenced to death. Through the clemency of the Governor-General, his punishment was commuted to imprisonment for life—a punishment which was of short duration, for Mulráj died within a few months of his trial.

We have now carried the story of the Sikhs down to the point where it merges with the history of

British India. It remains only to notice very briefly the effect of the annexation of the Punjab (1) on the province as a whole, and (2) on the Sikh people. As a result of the two Sikh wars, a territory of nearly ninety thousand square miles was added to the British dominions, and Lord Dalhousie at once took measures for its pacification and for the establishment of a strong and beneficent system of government. The accomplishment of this task was entrusted to a Board of Administration consisting of three members—Henry Lawrence, in charge of the political and military departments and President of the Board; John his brother, in charge of revenue and finance; and Charles Mansel (later succeeded by Robert Montgomery), as chief of the judicial branch. Amongst the officers selected to serve under this Board were Herbert Edwardes, John Nicholson, Reynell Taylor, George Lawrence, Abbot, Daly, and others whose names have become household words in the Punjab. "With singular success and in the most thorough detail," says John Lawrence's biographer, "the Board, in a country totally destitute of the machinery of government, created and established in a period of four years a system of administration complete in all its branches, military, civil, and financial, in addition to which it provided roads, canals, and jails, put an end to thuggy and dacoity, codified the laws, refined the coinage, and promoted agriculture." It is owing to the labours of this famous triumvirate that the Punjab is able to-day to look back upon sixty-five years of continuous peace, of steady progress, and save for the occasional vicissitudes of famine, of un-

broken prosperity. It may be doubted whether the history of any country in the world can show, within an equally short period, so remarkable a record of social, political, and material development as is to be found in the administration reports of this province since it fell under the control of the British Government.

The military organization of the new territory was carried out under the personal direction of Lord Dalhousie. For the protection of the North-West Frontier a line of forts and cantonments 500 miles in length was established, and to hold this line a new force, called the Punjab Frontier Force, was created. It consisted of five regiments of cavalry, five of infantry, three horse field-brigades, two companies of sappers and miners, a camel corps, and the celebrated corps of guides originally raised by Henry Lawrence in 1846. The full strength of this force was 11,000 men, of whom as many as 10 per cent. were Sikhs. To secure the internal peace of the province a police force was formed numbering 15,000 men, and in this, too, many Sikhs were enrolled. Half of this latter force was organized on military lines, and special duties were entrusted to it, such as the guarding of jails, treasuries, and frontier posts, and the providing of escorts for civil officers and the protection of treasure in transit. As an additional safeguard, the people of all districts except those on the North-West Frontier were disarmed.

The civil administration was conducted on the non-regulation system—that is to say, the ordinary laws and regulations were not formally introduced, and officers, though required to conform to the

spirit of those laws, were instructed to base their procedure as far as possible on native customs and institutions. For administrative purposes the country was mapped out into districts small enough to enable the officer in charge of each to gain a complete knowledge of and exercise a personal influence over its population, and every such officer was entrusted with judicial, fiscal, and magisterial powers. The position of these district officers was in fact not unlike that of the *kardárs* in the days of Ranjít Singh, and the people in consequence saw nothing unfamiliar in the extent and diversity of their powers. But though the new system resembled the old in its organization, it differed from it in every other particular, and nowhere was this difference more marked than in matters relating to the collection of revenue. Previous to 1849, the heavy transit and customs dues, combined with the badness and insecurity of the roads, rendered the exportation of grain an impossibility, and at the same time paralysed internal trade, and that to such an extent that the people of one district often starved for want of food while plenty reigned in the districts around them. Of the forty-eight imposts levied by Ranjít Singh only six were retained under the new régime; salt was the sole commodity subject to import duty, and that was collected only along the line of the North-West Frontier. The burden of the cultivator was similarly lightened. "We have substituted," wrote Ibbetson in 1881, "a fixed and moderate if inelastic assessment of land revenue for a demand about which the only certainty was that it would be excessive. The Sikhs often



took as much as a half of the year's produce, besides a multitude of cesses ; our demand never exceeds one-sixth, is frequently less than an eighth, a tenth, or a twelfth, and is in some cases not more than a fifteenth of the average gross produce."<sup>1</sup> In spite of these reductions, the new system soon began to yield a bigger revenue than had ever flowed into the Sikh exchequer.

The impetus thus given to trade and agriculture was increased ten-fold by the making of roads, railways, and irrigation canals. At the time of the annexation there was no railway, nor was there a yard of metalled road in the Punjab. The first line of rail was built in 1859 from Amritsar to Múltán. Twenty years later there were more than 1,000 miles of line open, and to-day there are more than 6,000. In addition metalled roads traverse the province in every direction, with a total length exceeding 3,000 miles. Irrigation works were carried out on an even more extensive scale. Such canals as existed in the days of the Sikh monarchy were few in number and ill-maintained. They were still further neglected during the anarchy which followed the death of Ranjít Singh, and when the province was taken over they were in a state of ruin. During his rule in the Punjab, John Lawrence spent £880,000 on canals. At the present time, of the 30,000,000 acres of land under cultivation, 10,000,000 acres owe their fertility to artificial irrigation, 760,000 being watered by the Bári Doáb Canal<sup>2</sup> alone. The

<sup>1</sup> Census Report for the Punjab for 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Opened in 1859.



Punjab triple canal scheme, now nearing its completion, will be the means of fertilizing another 2,000,000 acres of waste land. Many crores of rupees are being spent on this gigantic undertaking; and there could be no better testimony to the present prosperity of the province than the fact that the promoters of the scheme anticipate a profit of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the capital outlay.

Canals and railroads have revolutionized the conditions of life in the Punjab. By converting vast arid wastes into teeming plains, and by enabling the cultivator to place his produce on the world's markets, they have increased enormously the material wealth of the people; at the same time prices have been equalized, caste and tribal prejudices have to a large extent been obliterated, and the danger of serious food famines has been reduced to a minimum. As a recent writer has well said, not only do such great works as these increase prosperity: they create it. "Two of the Punjab canals have literally converted desolate, uninhabited places into thriving countries. Along the banks of the Chenab Canal (a portion of the triple project) now stretch fields and villages inhabited by a million people, where twelve years ago a few nomads wandered over a desert of parched earth and camel-thorn. The State irrigation works of India are of their kind the greatest and most beneficent triumphs of engineering that the world has seen."<sup>1</sup>

The judicial system set up by the Board was an entirely new creation. Like the revenue system it

<sup>1</sup> *Studies of Indian Life*, by Sir Bampfylde Fuller, p. 195.

was framed to suit the circumstances of the country, and was based on the "non-regulation" principle of according the fullest possible recognition to local and tribal usages. When Chief Commissioner of the Punjab (the province was converted into a Chief Commissionership in 1853) John Lawrence caused a complete code of laws, having special reference to the known peculiarities of the country and people, to be compiled. This code, the work of Sir Robert Montgomery and Sir Richard Temple, became the basis of the judicial administration, and was found to be so admirably suited to the requirements of a new country that it was afterwards introduced into Oudh and other non-regulation provinces. Many changes have taken place since the days of John Lawrence, and the Punjab is now equipped with a supreme civil and criminal court, divisional and sessions courts, small cause courts, and all the other requirements of an up-to-date judicial department. But though the earlier system has been superseded, its character has survived and reappears in the new; and it is still an established principle in the Punjab "that mercantile usages and local customs affecting the family life of the people and the disposition of their property shall be valid and shall be recognized by the courts of law, unless they be contrary to justice, equity, or good conscience."

Amongst the many other beneficent objects to which John Lawrence devoted his attention was the promotion of education, and here again his task was that of the pioneer, for the Punjab, so far as education was concerned, was virgin soil. The Sikh

Government did not maintain a single school, a few Muhammadan teachers scattered through the larger towns providing the only instruction available, and that of the most primitive description. The foundations of the present Department of Public Instruction were laid in 1854. The people were quick to take advantage of the opportunities placed before them, and during the ten succeeding years elementary schools were opened in every district, and in 1864 the Government colleges at Delhi and Lahore were established. In 1882, when the Punjab University was founded, over 200,000 pupils were receiving instruction.

This is not the place to enter upon a detailed account of the measures adopted for the consolidation of the Punjab. Enough has been said to give some idea of the progress of the province under British rule, and that for our present purpose must suffice. How as time went on the resources of the country were developed, how commerce leapt into being, how the postal and telegraph services carried the message of civilization to the remotest villages, how with the establishment of peace and good government wages rose and crime decreased, how the coinage was refined, how hospitals were opened for the sick, how public buildings were erected, forests conserved, wells sunk, and rivers bridged—all these are matters belonging to the history, not of the Sikhs, but of the British Empire in India. For the full story of the Punjab since 1849—the story of one of the greatest administrative achievements of modern times—the reader cannot do better than study the Administra-

tion Reports referred to above, together with the biographies of Lord Lawrence and the Marquis of Dalhousie.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now glance for a few moments at the effects of the annexation of the Punjab on the Sikhs themselves. On the overthrow of the Khálsa as a political power, Sikhism was for a time under a cloud, and would-be converts hesitated to enrol themselves amongst those who had taken up arms against the British Government. But this did not last long. It was soon discovered that the followers of the Sikh faith had nothing to fear at the hands of their new masters, and that the latter, so far from bearing them ill-will, recognized the valour they had displayed in their final struggle for supremacy, and were ready, not only to regard them as friends, but to welcome them as soldiers in the ranks of their own army. In a short time confidence was fully restored, and was followed by an immediate revival in the prestige of the Khálsa.

At the time of the annexation practically every Sikh was a soldier; and when the general disarmament of the province took place, though many turned to peaceful pursuits, the pick of them enrolled themselves either in the newly-formed regiments or in the military police. It was a fortunate circumstance for

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dalhousie left India in 1856. In 1858 the Delhi territory on the right bank of the Jumna was transferred to the North-West Province (now the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh), and the following year the Punjab was made a Lieutenant-Governorship, Sir John Lawrence being the first to hold the office of Lieutenant-Governor. In 1901 the North-West Frontier Province was formed, consisting of Hazára and the territory west of the Indus, excluding Dera Gházi Khán, the trans-Indus portion of the Isákhel, and the Baluchistan frontier.



the followers of Guru Govind Singh that they were thus able to find an outlet for their military zeal, and to it they owe the strong position which their faith holds to-day amongst the religions of India. The martial spirit is the life of the Khálsa, and there is little doubt that had there been no army for the Sikhs to enlist in they would ere now have been absorbed into the Hindu communities by which they were surrounded. As a man of peace the Sikh is apt to allow his religious fervour to cool; but at the first sound of the call to arms the spirit of Govind Singh stirs him anew, and he straightway returns, sword in hand, to the paths of orthodoxy. A great revival of this nature took place during the Mutiny, and again, though in a less marked degree, during the last Afghan War, and in each case the restoration of peace led to a sharp decline. Of late years the increased demand for Sikhs in the Indian army and farther afield has given a new and powerful impetus to Sikhism. The revival has been assisted by the spread of education and by the establishment of the Singh Sabhas and the Chief Khálsa Diwán (to which further reference will be made), and as a result the influence of the Khálsa has never, since the reign of Ranjít Singh, been stronger than it is to-day.

Lord Dalhousie's action in opening the ranks of the Indian army to his late foes, though severely criticized at the time, has been amply justified by subsequent events, and the British Government, no less than the Khálsa, has reaped the benefit of his bold policy. Conspicuous alike for their fine physique, their ready submission to discipline, and their splendid



fighting qualities, the Sikhs increased the efficiency of every regiment in which they took service, and in a short time came to be regarded as the most useful and reliable soldiers in the native army. They have since fully sustained their reputation, and have served with distinction under British colours not only in India, but in Egypt, in Afghanistan, in China, and in South Africa.

In the dark days of the Mutiny, the Sikh people as a whole loyally supported the British Ráj. The Rájá of Jínd was the first man, European or native, to take the field against the mutineers. His example was followed by the Rájás of Patiála, Nábha, and Kapáρθala, and afterwards by the Sikhs throughout the Punjab. At the siege of Delhi the contingents of the Sikh chiefs fought with great gallantry and materially assisted in the subsequent reoccupation of the surrounding territory. The fall of Delhi was the death-blow to the rebel cause, but the final issue of the struggle had ceased to be in doubt when the Punjab declared itself on the side of the British.

There are now 30,000 Sikh troops in the service of the Government, and they constitute the flower of the Indian army. Unhampered by caste prohibitions, the Sikh soldier will go anywhere and do anything. He is hardy, good-tempered, patient under privations, and obedient to discipline, and his courage is such that he never knows when he is beaten. "I would venture," says Sir Lepel Griffin, "to express my conviction, which is shared by many distinguished officers of the Indian army, that the Sikhs, infantry

and light cavalry, are, when well and sufficiently led by English officers, equal to any troops in the world, and superior to any with whom they are likely to come in contact.”

The growing popularity among the Sikhs of service in the Indian army, added to the fact that the Government obliges every Sikh recruit, who is not already a Singh,<sup>1</sup> to take the *pahul*, has replenished the ranks of the Khálsa, and has led to a rapid and extensive development in its organization. The general direction and control of religious matters is now vested in a Council known as the Chief Khálsa Diwán, with its headquarters at Amritsar. Like the *gurumata* of former days it is a representative and elective assembly, and is open to sirdars, military officers, graduates, and other Sikhs of position. It has no connection with the management of the Golden Temple, but the superintendent of the latter is *ex officio* a member of the Council. In addition to this Council there are smaller representative bodies at all important Sikh centres known as Khálsa Diwáns, and minor associations in the smaller towns and villages called Singh Sabhas. All these are affiliated to the Chief Khálsa Diwán, and elect representatives to serve on that body. The aim of this organization is to further the intellectual, social, moral, and material development of the people of the Khálsa, to promote the study of the *Granth Sahib* by providing preachers and religious instructors, and to represent the claims of the Khálsa to the supreme Government. The last of these functions can be

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D.

performed only by the chief council at Amritsar, the duties of the local associations being limited to religious, educational, and philanthropic work. The first Khálsa Diwán was established in 1901, and it was by this association that the Khálsa College at Amritsar, the chief educational institution of the Sikhs, was founded. The Chief Khálsa Diwán has since superseded the earlier association, and its offshoots are now to be found, not only throughout the Punjab, but in Burmah, the Straits Settlements, Africa, America, and England.

## APPENDIX A.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE I.—THE SIKH GURUS AND  
CONTEMPORARY MOGHUL EMPERORS.

Sikh Gurus.	A.D.	A.D.	Moghul Emperors.
	1469	1469	The Lodi Dynasty.
Bábabá Nának .....		1526	
			Bábar.
	1539	1530	Humáyún.
Angad .....			
	1552	1556	Akbar.
Amar Dás.....			
	1576		Jahángír.
Rám Dás.....	1581		
Arjún .....		1605	Shah Jahán.
	1606		
Har Govind .....		1627	Aurangzeb.
	1645		
Har Rai .....		1658	Bahádur Shah.
Har Krishen.....	1661		
Teg Bahádur.....	1664		
	1675		
Govind Singh.....		1707	
	1708		

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## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE II.—RISE OF THE SIKH POWER.

		MOGHUL EMPERORS.
Banda succeeds Govind as temporal leader of the Sikhs .....	1708	{ Bahádur Shah, 1707-1712.
The Sikhs plunder Sirhind.....	1713	
Subjugation of the Sikhs by Abdur Samad and death of Banda.....	1716	{ Farrukh Siyar, 1713-1719.
Invasion of Nádir Shah .....	1739	
<i>First</i> invasion of Ahmad Shah .....	1747-8	{ Muhammad Shah, 1719-1748.
Sikhs defeated by Mir Mannu, and <i>second</i> invasion of Ahmad Shah..	1748	
<i>Third</i> invasion of Ahmad Shah....	1750-2	{
Ahmad Shah annexes Lahore, death of Mir Mannu, and Lahore re-annexed to Delhi.....	1752	
<i>Fourth</i> invasion of Ahmad Shah, and Timúr made governor of the Punjab .....	1755-6	{ Ahmad Shah, 1748-1754.
Timúr destroys Amritsar .....	1756	
The Sikhs under Jassa Singh occupy Lahore, and Delhi occupied by the Mahrattas.....	1758	{ Alamgír, 1754-1759.
<i>Fifth</i> invasion of Ahmad Shah.....	1759-61	
Defeat of the Mahrattas at Pánipat	1761	{
The Sikhs defeat Khwája Obaid before Gujránwála, and ravage the country on either side of the Sutlej. <i>Sixth</i> invasion of Ahmad Shah, and signal defeat of the Sikhs near Ludhiána.....	1762	
The Sikhs defeat the Afghans near Sirhind, destroy the city, and permanently occupy the province	1763	{ Shah Alum, 1759-1771
The Sikhs occupy Lahore.....	1764	
<i>Eighth</i> invasion of Ahmad Shah, and withdrawal of the Sikhs from Lahore .....	1767	{
Death of Ahmad Shah. The Bhangi and Sukárchakia Misls take part in the Kashmír rebellion. Death of Charrat Singh...	1773	
Mahán Singh marries Ráj Kour....	1774	



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE III.—LIFE AND REIGN OF  
RANJÍT SINGH.

		GOVERNORS-GENERAL OF BRITISH INDIA.
Ranjít Singh born.....	1780	{ Warren Hastings, 1774-1785.
Becomes head of the Sukárchakia Misl.....	1792	{ Lord Cornwallis, 1786-1793. Sir John Shore, 1793-1798.
Captures Lahore.....	1799	{ Lord Wellesley, 1798-1805.
Subdues the Bhangi Misl and cap- tures Amritsar.....	1802	
Holkár takes refuge at Amritsar...	1805	{ Sir George Barlow (acting), 1805- 1807.
First treaty of friendship between Ranjít Singh and the British. Ranjít Singh crosses the Sutlej and captures Ludhiána.....	1806	
First attempt on Múltán.....	1807	
Cis-Sutlej Sikhs ask for British protection. Mr. Metcalfe's mis- sion to Lahore.....	1808	{ Lord Minto, 1807-1813.
Sikh treaty with the British Gov- ernment, the latter assuming protection of the Cis-Sutlej States	1809	
Second attempt on Múltán.....	1810	
Ranjít Singh's first expedition against Kashmír. Defeats the Afghans at Haidáru and captures Attock.....	1813	{ Marquess of Hast- ings, 1813-1823.
Ranjít Singh acquires the Koh-i- nur, and fails in second attempt on Kashmír.....	1814	
Various chiefs in the hills and towards the Indus reduced.....	1815-6	
Capture of Múltán.....	1818	{ Lord Amherst, 1823-1828.
Capture of Kashmír.....	1819	
The Sikhs defeat the Afghans at Nao-shera, and Pesháwar is made tributary to Lahore.....	1823	
Dost Muhammad supreme at Kábul.....	1826	
Insurrection of Syad Ahmad Shah.	1827-31	

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Lieutenant Burnes' mission to Lahore. Meeting between Ranjít Singh and Lord William Bentinck at Rúpar.....	1831	} Lord William Bentinck, 1828-1835.
Indus Navigation Treaty.....	1832	
Shah Shuja's attempt to recover his throne.....	1833-4	
Ladakh reduced by the Jammu Rajahs. Dost Muhammad invades Pesháwar, but retires without giving battle.....	1835	} Sir Charles Metcalfe (acting), 1835-1836.
Ranjít Singh abandons his claims to Shikárpúr.....	1836	
Battle of Jamrúd.....	1837	} Lord Auckland, 1836-1842.
Sir Alexander Burnes' mission to Kábul.....	1837-8	
The Tripartite Treaty.....	1838	
Death of Ranjít Singh, 27th July.	1839	

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE IV.—THE FIRST SIKH WAR.

1845.....December	11.....The Sikh army crosses the Sutlej.
„ ..... „	13.....Declaration of war by the British Government.
„ ..... „	18.....Battle of Mudkí.
„ ..... „	21, 22.....Battle of Firozshahr.
1846.....January	21.....Skirmish at Badhowál.
„ ..... „	28.....Battle of Aliwál.
„ .....February	10.....Battle of Sobráon.
„ ..... „	20.....British army enters Lahore.
„ .....March	9.....First Treaty of Lahore.
„ ..... „	11.....Supplementary Treaty.
„ ..... „	16.....Treaty with Ghuláb Singh.
„ .....December	22.....Second Treaty with Lahore.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE V.—THE SECOND  
SIKH WAR.

1848.....April	20.....Murder of Anderson and Vans Agnew at Múltán.
„ .....June	18.....Mulráj defeated by Edwardes at Kinéri.
„ .....July	1.....Mulráj defeated by Edwardes at Saddosam.
„ .....September	5.....Siege of Múltán begun.
„ ..... „	14.....Sher Singh joins the rebels, and the siege raised.
„ .....November	22.....Battle of Rámnaggar.
„ .....December	2.....British army crosses the Chenáb.
„ ..... „	3.....Battle of Sadúlapúr.
1849.....January	13.....Battle of Chilianwála.
„ ..... „	21.....Fall of Múltán.
„ .....February	20.....General Whish's force from Múltán joins the main army.
„ ..... „	21.....Battle of Gujráť.
„ .....March	12.....Sikh army surrenders at Ráwal Pindi.
„ ..... „	29.....Annexation of the Punjab.

## APPENDIX B.

### THE RULERS OF AFGHANISTAN.

Ahmad Shah Duráni was the first ruler under whom Afghanistan rose to importance. He reigned for twenty-six years, from 1747 to 1773, during which time he extended his kingdom westward to the shores of the Caspian, and eastward to the banks of the Sutlej, though his hold over his Indian possessions was never very strong. He was styled Dúr-i-durran, "Pearl of the Age," from which his clan, that of the Abdalis, derived its name, the Duráni.

Ahmad Shah's greatest achievement was the defeat of the Mah-rattas at Pánipat, on January 6, 1761. He was succeeded by his son Timúr, who reigned for twenty years. Timúr transferred his capital from Kandahár to Kábul. He made no attempt to establish his sway over the Punjab, and with difficulty staved off the anarchy which followed his death. He left twenty-three sons, and was succeeded by the fifth, Shah Zemán. Zemán held the throne for six years, and was then ousted by his brother, Shah Mahmúd, who, three years later, suffered a like fate at the hands of another brother, Shah Shuja.

For many years the country was given over to internecine wars. In 1809, owing to the intrigues of Napoleon in Persia, a mission under Mountstuart Elphinstone was dispatched to Kábul by the Government of India. The mission was well received, but soon after its departure Shah Mahmúd succeeded in recovering his throne, and Shah Shuja and Shāh Zemán sought refuge in British territory. Mahmúd was a puppet in the hands of his minister Fateh Khán, the eldest of the famous Bārakzai brothers, and a redoubtable warrior and statesman.

Fateh Khán was brutally murdered in 1818 by Kamrán, the worthless son of Mahmúd, and his brothers, whom he had placed in charge of the various provinces of Afghanistan, united to avenge his death. Mahmúd was driven from Kábul and fled to Herát, where with the aid of Kamrán he managed to preserve for a time

the remnants of his power. The rest of the country was divided amongst the Bárakzai brothers, Dost Muhammad Khán, the ablest of them all, getting Kábul, where, in 1826, he assumed the title of Amír, and became the ruler of Afghanistan.

In 1837, owing to the intrigues of Russia with Persia and the siege of Herát, the Government of India sent Sir Alexander Burnes to Kábul to negotiate an alliance with the Amír. The mission failed in its object, and Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, with a view to establishing British influence in Afghanistan, took the rash determination to depose the Amír and to restore Shah Shuja. This was successfully accomplished in April 1839, and a British army of occupation remained in Afghanistan to protect the newly crowned monarch, Dost Muhammad being sent to Calcutta, where he remained a state prisoner. Two years later an insurrection, headed by the Dost's son, Akbar Khán, resulted in the murders of the British representatives, Burnes and Macnaghten, and the total destruction of the British garrison of Kábul. This disaster was retrieved the same year by the advance of General Pollock from the Khaibar Pass, and General Nott from Kandahár. Kábul was occupied, the British prisoners were released, Akbar Khán was routed, and the citadel and central bazar of the city were destroyed. The British force evacuated Kábul at the end of the year, and Shah Shuja having, in the meantime, been assassinated, Dost Muhammad Khán was allowed to return to his former position as Amír of Afghanistan, which he continued to hold till his death in 1865.

#### LIST OF THE RULERS AT KÁBUL.

Ahmad Shah Duráni.....	1747-1773.
Timúr .....	1773-1793.
Shah Zemán <sup>1</sup> .....	1793-1800.
Shah Mahmúd <sup>2</sup> .....	1800-1803.
Shah Shuja <sup>3</sup> .....	1803-1810.
Shah Mahmúd <sup>4</sup> .....	1810-1818.
Shah Ayub <sup>5</sup> .....	1818-1826.
Dost Muhammad Khán <sup>6</sup> .....	1826-1839.
Shah Shuja <sup>7</sup> .....	1839-1842.
Dost Muhammad Khán <sup>8</sup> .....	1842-1865.

<sup>1</sup> Deposed by his brother Mahmúd.

<sup>3</sup> Deposed by his brother Mahmúd.

<sup>5</sup> Ruler in name only.

<sup>7</sup> Assassinated.

<sup>2</sup> Deposed by his brother Shuja.

<sup>4</sup> Expelled by the Bárakzai brothers.

<sup>6</sup> Deposed by the British.

<sup>8</sup> Founder of the present dynasty.



## APPENDIX C.

### NOTES ON SOME PUNJAB TRIBES.

(Compiled from the *Census Report of the Punjab for 1881*, by  
Mr. Denzil Ibbetsen, I.C.S.)

*The Ghakkars.*—The Ghakkars were probably emigrants from Khorásán who settled in the Punjab about 300 A.D. They are Shiahhs by religion, and once ruled over large tracts of the Northern Punjab, and also, according to their own account, over Kashmir and Tibet. At present they are practically confined to the Ráwal Pindi, Jehlam, and Hazára districts. They are a sturdy, vigorous race, making good soldiers and the best light cavalry in Upper India. Though reduced by the Sikhs to abject poverty, they still preserve traces of their high origin and breeding. They are proud and self-respecting, but not afraid of hard work. Many now work as coolies on the railways, though they prefer to serve in the army or the police.

*The Awáns.*—The Awáns are probably of Rájput origin, though they claim descent from Ati, the son-in-law of the Prophet, but by a wife other than the Prophet's daughter. They settled about 1035 A.D. in the Pesháwar district, and eventually became possessed of the Salt Range country. Like the Ghakkars, they are a high-spirited and brave race, but indolent, and very poor cultivators. Their manners are frank and pleasing; but they are a headstrong people, ever ready to quarrel, and family feuds are often kept alive from generation to generation.

*The Tiwánas.*—The Tiwánas, the handsomest and most picturesque of the Punjab races, are, in all probability, of Rájput origin. There were, according to Sir Lepel Griffin, three important Rájput invasions of the Punjab—the first in prehistoric times, perhaps not later than 2500 B.C.; the second a thousand years after; and the third from the tenth to the fifteenth century of the Christian era, when many Rájput tribes migrated to the province whose descendants are the Játs, Tiwánas, Siáls, Kokhars, etc. The Tiwánas are splendid horsemen. After their final subjugation in 1818, Ranjít Singh took fifty

of them to Lahore as his personal bodyguard. As soldiers they are behind the Sikhs in all-round usefulness; but they have on various occasions, notably in 1849 and 1857, fought with conspicuous bravery on the side of the English.

*The Khatri.*—The Khatri claims to be a direct representative of the Kohatriya of Manu. Trade is the chief occupation of this caste, but in the Punjab they are in addition the chief civic administrators, and have almost all the literate work in their hands. They are not military in their character, but are quite capable of using a sword when necessary. Báábá Nának and Govind Singh were both Khatri, as were also Diwan Sáwan Mar of Múltán, and his notorious successor Mulráj, and many other of Ranjít Singh's chief functionaries. The Sikh priesthood is recruited almost entirely from this caste. The Khatri are generally well educated, and are staunch Hindus; and though they have given a religion and priests to the Sikhs, comparatively few of them adopt the faith of the Khálsa. No village can get on without the Khatri, who keeps the accounts, does the banking business, and buys and sells the grain. He is a great traveller, and is to be found as far afield as Central Asia; but his home, *par excellence*, is in the central districts of the Punjab.

*The Aroras.*—The Aroras are the traders of the Deraját and Múltán divisions, and to some extent also of the Central and Northern Punjab. They claim to be of Khatri origin, but the claim is disallowed by the more important caste. It seems probable that they are descended from the Khatri of Aror, the ancient capital of Sindh, now represented by the modern Rori. The Arora is, however, inferior to the Khatri both in character and social position. He is altogether destitute of martial instincts, and is commonly known as a Korár, or shopkeeper; but he is enterprising, industrious, and thrifty. He is an excellent cultivator, and will turn his hand to any work. In the Western Punjab he may be seen sewing cloths, weaving matting and baskets, making vessels of brass and copper, and doing goldsmith's work. The Aroras are Hindus by religion, but a few profess the faith of Islam, and about seven per cent. are Sikhs.

*The Dogras.*—The word Dogra is another name for the Jammu territory, and the Dogras are Rájput who inhabit that region; but the word Dogra is commonly applied to any inhabitant of Jammu, whatever his caste. Their Rájput origin is undoubted, but it is equally certain that they are not pure Rájputs.

## APPENDIX D.

### SIKHS AND SINGHS.

(Compiled from the Census Report of the Punjab for 1881.)

Sikhism has assumed two very different forms at different periods of its history, in the tolerant Quietist doctrines of Nának, and the military propaganda of Govind Singh. The admission of all castes to equality by Guru Govind disgusted many of the higher classes, who refused to accept his teachings though they remained faithful to the tenets of Bábá Nának, and thus a schism arose in the faith. In strictness the followers of both are Sikhs, a word said to be derived from the same root as the common Sanskrit word *Sewak* and meaning nothing more than a disciple; but while the followers of the first Gurus, or Nánaki Sikhs, are *Sikhs*, they are not *Singhs*, which is the title by which the followers of Govind, or Govindi Sikhs, are distinguished. In common practice, however, it is the latter only who are called Sikhs, it is they only who are ordinarily regarded as such by the unlearned, and who are commonly referred to when the word is used. The vast majority of those who profess only the tenets of Nának call themselves Hindus, and will have returned themselves as such for the purposes of the Census Report, though the more educated of them would explain that they are at the same time Sikhs, though not Singhs. The Nánaki Sikhs are distinguished by no outward sign, have no peculiar customs or observances, and though they reverence the *Granth*, and above all the memory of their Guru, have but little to distinguish them from any other Hindu sect, except a slight laxity in the matter of caste observances. They have a form of baptism known as *Charam Gháwal*, but it is seldom made use of. A large proportion of the Hindus of the frontier belong to this sect, and it is probable that a large number of the people of Sindh who have returned themselves as Sikhs are really nothing more than Nánaki Sikhs.

## APPENDIX E.

### EARLIEST EDITIONS OF THE *GRANTH SAHIB*.

(Compiled from Macauliffe's "*The Sikh Religion*.")

There were three editions of the *Granth Sahib* made in the days of the Gurus, the first transcribed by Bhai Gur Dás and dictated by Guru Arjún, the second by Bhai Banno, and the third by Bhai Mani Singh under the supervision of Guru Govind Singh. The two first are said to be in existence still, one at Kartárpúr, and the other at Mánjat in the Gujarát district of the Punjab. The third and most complete edition was either destroyed or taken away by Ahmad Shah Duráni when he despoiled the temple at Amritsar.

On the arrival of Guru Arjún at Amritsar, he made plans for the compilation of the *Granth Sahib*. He fixed for the purpose on a secluded spot, where gand, wild caper, Indian fig, and pipal trees yielded agreeable shade, while green herbage gratified the eye and offered a pleasant carpet for the feet. The followers of the principal Indian saints, Hindu and Muhammadan, since the days of Jaidev, were invited by the Guru to attend and suggest suitable hymns for insertion in the sacred volume; and such of the recitations as conformed to the spirit of reform then in vogue, and were not inconsistent with the teaching of the Guru, were adopted and incorporated. The hymns of the *Granth* were arranged according to rágs, or musical measures. The hymns of the first Guru, Makalla I., came first, those of the second Guru, Makalla II., second, and so on. After the Gurus' hymns the hymns of the Bhagats, or other Hindu saints, were inserted, though without any fixed order of precedence.

When all the hymns for insertion had been selected, the Guru sat within his tent and dictated them to his scribe, Bhai Gur Dás. After much time and labour, the volume was completed on the first

day of the light half of Bhádon, Sambat<sup>1</sup> 1661 (A.D. 1604). The Guru called all his Sikhs to see the precious compilation, which was, by the advice of Bhai Gur Dás, deposited in the Har Mandar.

Amongst those who came to see the *Granth* was Bhai Banno, who resided at Mángat. He came with a large following and begged that he might have the loan of the book to show it to his flock. The Guru was most unwilling to part with it, but was finally prevailed on to do so. According to his order Bhai Banno might read it to his Sikhs on his way home, but he was not to retain it in his village for more than a single night. Bhai Banno accordingly took the *Granth*, and made his journey to Mángat so slowly that he was able to take a copy of the whole volume before returning it. There is another story—namely, that the *Granth Sahib* was entrusted to Bhai Banno to have it bound in Lahore, and that in taking it there he had an unauthorized copy prepared. Bhai Banno inserted in his edition selections from his own compositions.

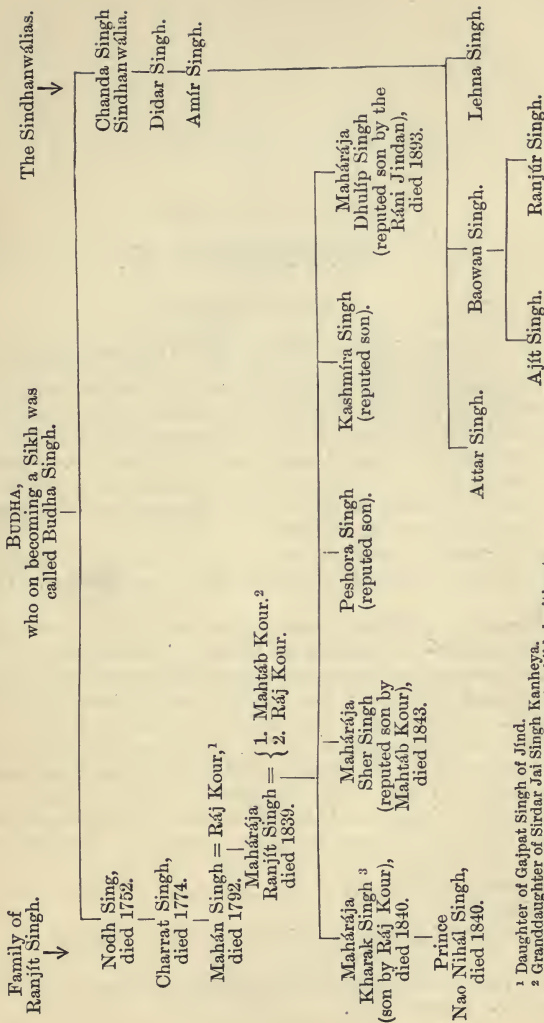
Prior to the days of Guru Angad the compositions of the saints and reformers were for the most part written in the Sanskrit character. On the death of Bába Nának, Guru Angad, deeming that the compositions of his master were worthy of a special character of their own, adopted and modified a Punjabi alphabet, thenceforward called Gurumukhi, to give expression to what had fallen from the Guru's lips. The Gurumukhi character was well calculated to make its readers part with Hindu compositions written in Sanskrit. The Gurumukhi *S* is the Sanskrit *M*, the Gurumukhi *M* is the Sanskrit *Bh*, the Gurumukhi *W* is the Sanskrit *D*, the Gurumukhi *Dh* is the Sanskrit *P*, and the Gurumukhi *B* is nearly the Sanskrit *Gh*. When, therefore, one has become accustomed to the use of the Gurumukhi letters, a special and separate effort is required to read Sanskrit, however much one may have been previously acquainted with it. The result has been that in most cases Gurumukhi scholars have parted company with Sanskrit and the multitudinous works in that recondite language.

<sup>1</sup> The era commonly used by the Hindus of the northern half of India is that called Sambat (Sanskrit, *samvat*, "year"), which dates from the month *Katik* of the year 57 B.C., when King Vikramaditya is said to have ascended the throne of Ujjain.



# APPENDIX F.

## GENEALOGICAL TREE OF THE FAMILIES OF MAHARÁJA RANJIT SINGH AND THE SINDHANWÁLÍAS.



<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Gajpat Singh of Jind.  
<sup>2</sup> Granddaughter of Sirdar Jai Singh Kanheya.  
<sup>3</sup> According to Sir Lepel Griffin, the only child, legitimate or otherwise, ever born to Ranjit Singh.

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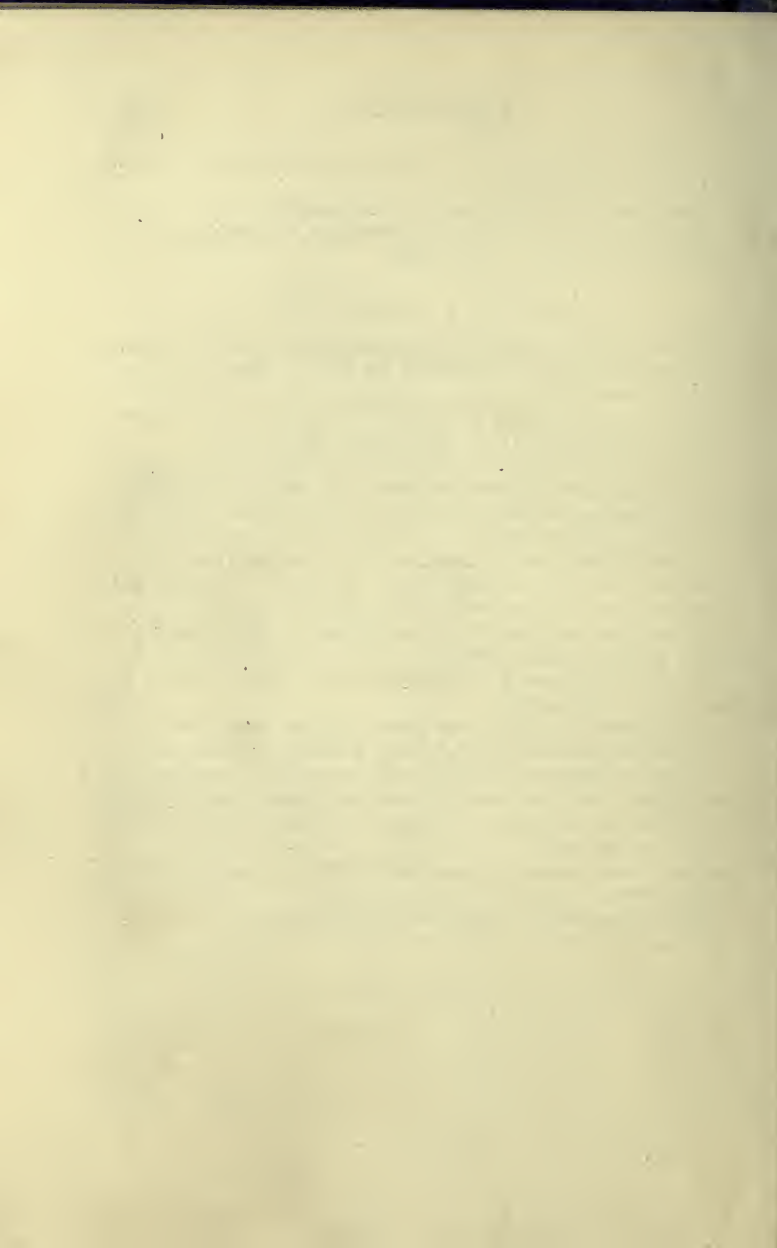
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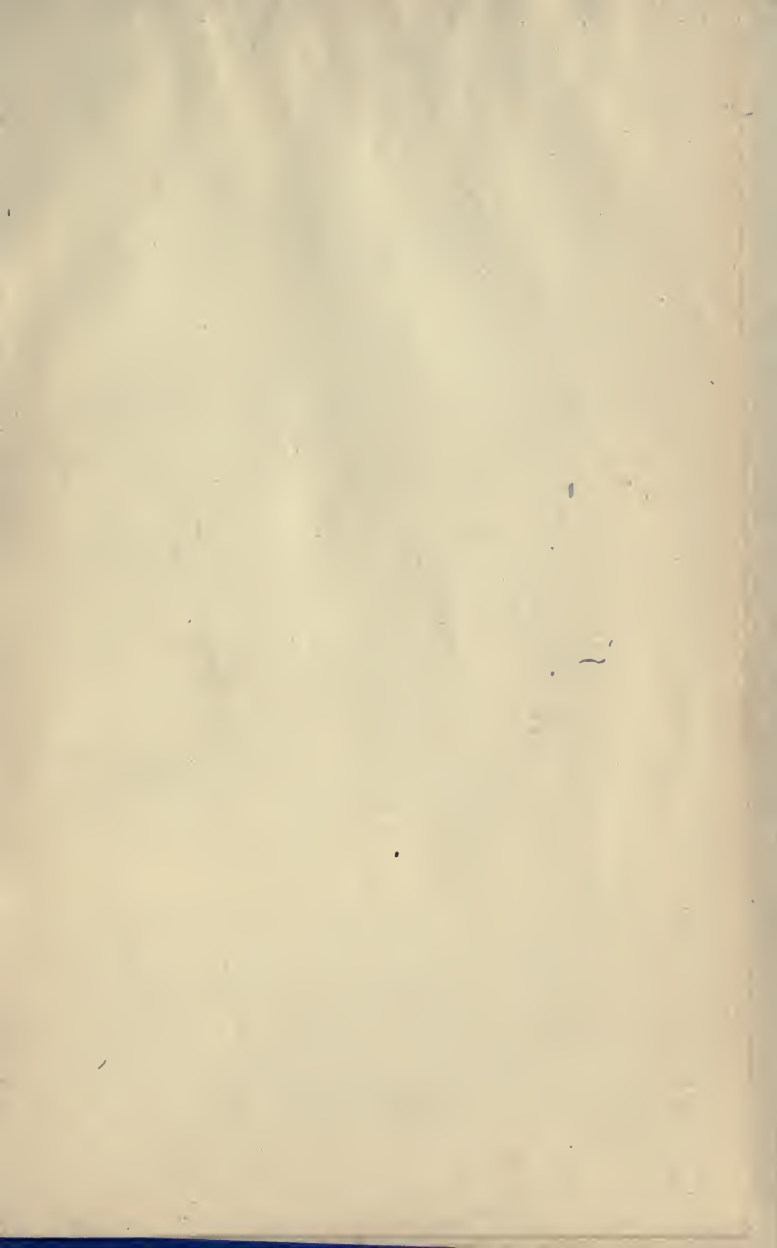
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